The Middlebury Campus

VOL. CXX, No. 10 | MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT, DECEMBER 2, 2021 | MIDDLEBURYCAMPUS.COM

News in Brief

College sees uptick in active Covid-19 cases prior to Thanksgiving break

By ABIGAIL CHANG
Managing Editor

On Sunday Nov. 28, the day many students returned to Middlebury from Thanksgiving break, the college's Covid-19 Reporting Dashboard listed 13 active cases — three employee positives and 10 student positives. Just three active cases remained on Monday, according to the dashboard, and there were three reported employee cases and zero reported student cases as of press time on Wednesday.

"Cases are sporadic," Chief Health Officer and College Physician Mark Peluso said in an email to The Campus. "We currently have three active cases and the number fluctuates based on isolation. We have had more cases this semester than previous semesters."

The 13 positives mark the highest number of simultaneous active cases at the college since the start of the pandemic, breaking an earlier record of 10 cases reported on the dashboard on Nov. 22.

"Higher numbers on our highly vaccinated campus likely reflect increased prevalence of the Delta variant in Vermont and the local community," Peluso said.

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK: FIRE OVER PLEIAD LAKE

Photo by Aidan Shepardson '24. To enter a photo, go to go/photooftheweek

LOCAL

VERMONT REPORTS 1,667 CASES OVER FIVE-DAY HOLIDAY BREAK

Though Vermont's cases have decreased over the past 14 days, Addison County case counts have risen by 80% in the same timeframe

By BECCA AMEN
Senior Local Editor

Addison County reported 93 new cases on Nov. 29, marking an 80% increase in cases over the past 14 days as of Tuesday.

"Cases have increased recently and are extremely high," read the New York Times webpage dedicated to tracking Covid-19 in Addison County as of Dec. 1.

Vermont reported a rolling seven-day average of 383.71 cases on Nov. 24 — a case number that is more than twice the number of cases reported during the peak of the previous surge of cases in April 2021. And as of Nov. 30, Vermont has the seventh most per capita cases in the country, tied with New Mexico.

The state is suffering one of the most intense surges in the country despite continuing to possess the highest vaccination rates among the fifty states. The Vermont Department of Health (VDOH) Covid-19 dashboard indicated 1,667 new cases over the five days of holiday break.

The most severe spike in daily case counts during the holiday week took place on Wednesday, Nov. 24 with 561 new cases in Vermont, the second-highest one-day total for the state since the beginning of the pandemic. Testing around the holidays usually results in some irregularities due to circumstances such as limited hours at testing sites or labs closing for the break, which may cause data to reflect an initial decline in cases followed by a potential spike.

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Number of students staying on campus over Thanksgiving break sees significant increase

By ALEXANDRA BURNS
Staff Writer

Content Warning: This article includes mentions of the death of a student.

This year, some 400 students applied to remain on campus for Thanksgiving break, a notable increase from previous years, when a typical number of students was 200 to 250. Students who wanted to stay on campus for some or all of the break were required to indicate their intentions in the student housing portal, but no approval was necessary to do so.

"We can only speculate on the reason for the uptick of course, but one guess that seems reasonable is that students are worried about the risks associated with travel, and perhaps worried that the return to campus process will be an onerous one," Dean of Students Derek Doucet wrote in an email to The Campus.

Doucet believes that concerns about the impact of Covid-19 on travel were "at least a contributing factor" to the unusually high number of students registered to stay on campus. He said that after a second email detailing Covid-19 policies for the break was sent out, he heard from

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SPORTS

RECORD BREAKERS: FIELD HOCKEY WINS FOURTH CONSECUTIVE NCAA DIII NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

By SOPHIE HILAND
Staff Writer

Before this season, no NCAA DIII field hockey team had ever won four straight national championships.

That all changed on Sunday, Nov. 21 when the Panthers defeated Johns Hopkins, 4–1, to capture the national title in Hartford, Conn. The Panthers have now won the national title in every season since 2017 (absent the 2020 season, which was canceled due to Covid-19).

Over the course of two sunny days in Hartford, Middlebury first defeated Rowan University, 4–1; and then Johns Hopkins in the national final. Here is how it happened:

COURTESY OF WILL COSTELLO

Field hockey celebrates their fourth-straight national championship.

Semi-Final: Middlebury 4, Rowan University 1

Middlebury dominated play against Rowan University in the national semi-final, beating the Profs, 4–1.

Seven minutes into the game, Erin Nicholas '22 weaved through two defenders and passed to Sadie LeStage '23, who redirected the pass to Katie George '23. The attacker took two shots on goal before slotting home the rebound in the bottom right corner of the cage.

Play continued on both sides of the field with two attempted goals by Rowan which were blocked by Panther goalie Grace Harlan '22.5. The Profs did manage to get on the board when NFHCA Region IV Player of the Year Kristiina Castagnola reverse chipped the ball over Harlan and into the upper corner of the cage.

With eleven minutes left in the first half, Nicholas earned Middlebury a 2–1 advantage with her 25th goal of the season.

George added to Middlebury's lead six minutes into the second half after receiving a pass from Meg Fearey '21.5 in the middle of the field. George carried the ball into the circle, beat a defender and then lifted the ball above Rowan's goaltender. With just two minutes to go, Nicholas scored another tally off a feed from Amy Griffin '23.5, sealing the team's 4–1 victory.

Final: Middlebury 4, Johns Hopkins 1

The next day, the Panthers (21–0) faced off against Johns Hopkins (22–0) in a familiar position: the national championship.

Just over eight minutes into play, Audrey Lazar '23 carried the ball into the circle and fired a shot on frame, which George collected and tipped into the cage. Five minutes later, Nicholas buried a penalty stroke, giving the Panthers a 2–0 lead.

After the half, the Blue Jays took possession of the ball for the better part of the third quarter. During a penalty corner with about thirty two minutes left on the clock, Middlebury goalie Grace Harlan '22.5 kicked away a Johns Hopkins shot.

Middlebury increased their lead to 3–0 just over eight minutes into the second half. Lazar took a shot which the Blue Jays' goalie kicked away, but George was there once again to knock the ball in. It was George's fourth goal of the weekend and the second time Lazar and George worked to score a goal as a tandem.

During a penalty corner with twelve minutes left in the game, Nicholas netted her 65th and final career goal. Joan Vera '22 inserted the ball and Nicholas made a direct shot into the cage.

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Sophomores Youness Cheboubi '24 and Malick Thiam '24 organized and ran in a marathon on...

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Listen up schmucks, it's time for some more truth from your favorite Jewish classmates. By this point we assume you're familiar with our work, we're a couple of Jewish Americans...

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Middlebury Pranksters sweep regional event, book tickets to nationals
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The men's and women's ultimate frisbee teams, known as the Pranksters, are nationals bound following comfortable wins at the New...

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ITS, ODEI works to display accurate names and pronouns in college systems

By XIAOYUAN JIAO
Contributing Writer

For many transgender and nonbinary students, updating and having their names properly displayed on Middlebury's online platforms had been a complicated struggle. In the past year, however, with collaboration between Information and Technology Services (ITS) and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), the college has made strides toward protecting and affirming student's gender identities, specifically through adjusting online platforms to properly display students' names.

Some transgender and nonbinary students' names do not match the legal name that appears on state- or federally-issued IDs and documentation; when this legal name does not match their name, some transgender and nonbinary students refer to this legal name as a deadname. Middlebury offers students an option to update their name in BannerWeb to ensure that college systems reflect their chosen name rather than their deadname, but many have struggled to see that change accurately update across all systems.

In the past, students have reported being inadvertently outed to their peers or their professors

because when they change their name on BannerWeb, the change does not always get carried over to other platforms — or when it does, it often gets displayed in parentheses after their deadname. Recent changes have aimed to reduce such issues and make the process for updating names and pronouns more inclusive.

"For example, if a student has entered a chosen name in BannerWeb, that is the only name that faculty members will see," Renee Wells, assistant vice president of education for equity and inclusion, said in an email to The Campus.

Some offices on campus, such as Student Financial Services, need access to both chosen names and deadnames for administrative purposes, and Wells has worked with ITS to develop a list of guidelines to help ensure students are not unintentionally misnamed, misgendered or outed.

"I still can't change my middle initial in BannerWeb, which causes problems whenever I send my transcript somewhere for a scholarship," said Francis Shiner '23. "The name on my transcript doesn't match the name on my personal email, which leads to confusion."

Correcting the display of students' names is complicated by the fact that Middlebury

continually adopts software programs produced by outside vendors, and outsourced online platforms have very different levels of priority for this technical feature.

"Now we have a process in place for telling vendors that chosen name capability is something we need," Assistant Vice President and Chief Information Officer Vijay Menta said in an email to The Campus.

As part of ITS's current operation, any new software programs and systems should receive updates students make in BannerWeb. Although some software makers have already incorporated this into their programs, others have not. The current challenge is to ensure that new programs and software are capable of accommodating student name changes, which, according to Menta, "will be an ongoing process and will take time before many of our current systems can accommodate the chosen name fully."

"I still see my given name every time I enter Oracle to log my work hours, or when I register for classes in Banner9, or I check my grades in BannerWeb," Shiner said. "Panopto, Canvas and Handshake list my correct name, which feels nice."

According to Wells and Menta, feedback from students was a key aspect in making effective improvements. ITS and ODEI are having regular project status meetings to review their progress, and ITS encourages students to reach out to Wells in ODEI and discuss their specific concerns confidentially.

Wells and ITS also worked together to revise the form for entering or updating student information. Students can now enter their pronouns with the updated text-entry option instead of a predetermined list of options, allowing them to enter pronouns like he/him, ze/hir or she/they. Students will also have an option to enter a prefix in lieu of selecting a default prefix such as "Ms." or "Mr." In the future, students will also be able to indicate whether or not their chosen name and pronouns can be used for communications with parents/legal guardians and other external communications.

In the Middlebury community, there is a range of awareness about and experience using pronouns inclusively, especially nonbinary pronouns. According to Wells, many members of the campus community, including faculty and staff, are not accustomed to using these pronouns and make mistakes, which has a significant impact on feelings of inclusion and belonging for trans and nonbinary students.

"It is important for those of us for whom this is new to intentionally increase our ability to consciously and consistently use the pronouns that affirm each individual on campus," Wells said. Ensuring that databases display students names and pronouns correctly helps facilitate this.

In October, the Senior Leadership Group unanimously endorsed ITS's plans to continue

investing in resources and education on displaying students' chosen names in online systems.

"I am confident that with our commitment and the Middlebury community's support, we will be able to improve many of our systems for students in the futu re," Menta said

Number of students staying on campus over Thanksgiving break sees significant increase

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several students who had changed their minds upon realizing that the return process was easier than initially expected.

Fully vaccinated students who had no known exposures or Covid-19 symptoms would not be required to quarantine or test after returning to campus from Thanksgiving travel, a Middlebury Updates email sent on Nov. 15 said. The email provided information on optional pre-travel and post-break asymptomatic Covid-19 testing and gave the option for students to rescind their request to stay on campus if the new information changed their decision.

Students residing at Bread Loaf and the Marriott who did not depart Middlebury for the holiday were relocated to on-campus housing for the five-day break, The Campus reported on Nov. 11.

According to Associate Dean of Student Life AJ Place, the approximately 400 students planning to stay for the break included 14 Bread Loaf residents.

The decision to relocate off-campus students was largely due to limited access to a kitchen, something key to the well-being of all students on campus over the break since dining halls were closed. In an all-student email sent on Oct. 25, the ResLife team outlined the schedule for the closing of the dining halls and explained that students would be responsible for their own meals during the break. ResLife's email stated that students "with high financial need remaining on campus over break may also be eligible for additional food assistance," and then specified how assistance would be provided a few days before the break.

To accommodate the high volume of students remaining on campus, the college updated some dining policies. Atwater dining hall, which planned to provide a Thanksgiving day meal, opened for an additional day. Food trucks were also on campus for a day, and Dining Services announced they would be stocking the kitchens of Forest and Coffrin halls with essential, non-perishable items throughout the break.

Unlike last year, when students were required to leave campus at Thanksgiving and conduct the rest of the semester remotely, students this year had a choice of whether or not to depart campus for break before returning to the college for the final three weeks of the semester. Complex family relationships, personal health concerns and financial burdens are some of the reasons students opted to stay.

Samia Sami '24, who is from California, felt that the expensive flight and lengthy travel process was not worth the short amount of time they would have at home. Sami had friends also planning to stay on campus, but most of them live in other dorms.

Despite an increase in students staying on campus, isolation was a concern for many. Sami said they were concerned about their mental health spiraling during the break.

Many international students also remained on campus over the break due to the inconvenience or inability to travel home. Mariia Dzholos '24, an international student, was hoping to travel to Boston for part of the break with a friend, but after having trouble finding adequate transportation, changed her plan to stay for the full break.

"I am fortunate enough to live in a house, so we have a nice kitchen and so we plan to cook," Dzholos said in an interview before the break.

Rachel Peck '25 stayed on campus over break, where they became frustrated with the minimal dining options, and disappointed in the lack of programming. Peck replied all to an email sent by Executive Director of Food Service Operations Dan Detora with a proposal to improve the quality of life for students remaining on campus through food.

Peck had planned to spend Thanksgiving break on campus with their friend Yan Zhou '23, who passed away last month. After Zhou's death, Peck became increasingly concerned about the break, especially with what they felt was unclear messaging from the college.

"I decided that the only way to get through it was to take it into my own hands and I thought it would be a good way for me to personally honor [Yan]" Peck said. "I wanted to find a way to share food and share company and to help combat loneliness because I think it's a really lonely time, especially when so many people are talking about going home to their families and some of us just have no option."

In the reply all email, Peck included the link to a document for people to sign up to cook or simply to attend meals as well as a group chat to coordinate casual hang-outs throughout the week. At the time of the interview, there were 36 people in the groupchat.

"We have people cooking East African food, ramen and Italian food, so it's a really multicultural group," Peck said.

Eloise Berdahl-Baldwin '21.5 made the decision to stay for break after realizing that the travel time, compounded by family health concerns, would make it extremely difficult to leave. Berdahl-Baldwin has friends living in an off-campus apartment whose kitchen she planned to use during break, but expressed concern for the volume of students staying on campus with lack of access to a kitchen and said she thought Peck's proposal was a good one.

"I thought it was really cool and bold," Berdahl-Baldwin said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

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"Fortunately, fully vaccinated individuals have reduced risk of exposure and the worst effects of the virus.

A Nov. 19 all-school email from administrators notified the community of four of the previous 10 cases, addressed the prevalence of Covid-19 in Vermont and reminded students and employees of booster shot and testing opportunities.

> "Higher numbers on our highly vaccinated campus likely reflect increased prevalence of the Delta variant in Vermont and the local community."

Vermont broke its record for new daily reported Covid-19 cases twice in November. Case counts were on the rise for much of the month but are down 12% over the past two weeks, according to The New York Times on Wednesday morning. Despite statewide decline, cases in Middlebury's home county are trending upward. As of Wednesday morning, Addison County had reported 236 new cases over the past two weeks, an 80% increase.

But despite Vermont's high case counts, Governor Phil Scott has refused to implement a statewide indoor mask mandate. In a Nov. 22 special session, the Vermont Legislature passed a bill allowing municipalities to vote on implementing town-wide indoor mask mandates.

Previously, Scott had barred towns from putting in place municipal mask mandates, saying local officials in Brattleboro did not have that authority when they tried to implement a mandate in August. The Windham County town was the first municipality to put in place a mask mandate following the legislature's decision, according to reporting from VTDigger.

Prior to the legislature's vote, Scott said he would only approve the bill if it included certain limitations, including an April 30 expiration date for all municipal mask mandates enacted under it.

Brian Carpenter, chair of the Middlebury Selectboard, did not respond to a request for comment on whether the Selectboard plans to vote on a municipal mask mandate.

Peluso recommended several measures students can take to reduce their risk of contracting Covid-19, including understanding current conditions in Vermont, getting a booster shot and wearing a well-fitted face covering indoors and in crowded spaces.

Peluso also said students should prepare to schedule pre-arrival tests for late December — prior to their return for J-Term — and noted that more details about this process are forthcoming.

LUCY TOWNEND/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Robert A. Jones '59 house, home to the Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs

ROHATYN GLOBAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM LAUNCHES TO CONNECT FIRST YEARS TO A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

By RYAN McELROY
Contributing Writer

The Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs launched the Rohatyn Global Scholars (RGS) program this fall, aiming to connect first-year students to the global resources available through Middlebury programs.

The RGS program includes students with different backgrounds, perspectives and interests. The current class of Global Scholars come from 12 first year seminar classes that range from "Reading Africa" to "Being a Public Scientist." The program was intended for any Middlebury first-year student who wanted to learn more about the world without considering what they intend to study in college.

The program was created this year under the guidance of the program director, Professor Nadia Horning, and Rohatyn Center Director Mark Williams. They envisioned a program that would help these students access a global education at Middlebury from their first semester on campus.

"One of the basic goals of the program was to provide [students] with a broader global mindset that they can then take into whatever major they might ultimately declare," Williams said. "Whether it is theater or in STEM, whether it's in social sciences or the humanities, they will carry this experience with them."

The RGS program began in October and includes a group of 14 students in a range of global events and discussions on campus. The students have been attending events including "How Democracies Die: Lessons from Turkey," by Professor Sebnem Gumuscu, and "Vladimir Putin: Weak Strongman" by Columbia University Professor Tim Frye. Following these events, the students gather in discussions to connect with each other and develop potential solutions.

"Through the lectures we've had, I've been able to see issues from a different perspective," Hinda Ibraahim '25, one of the current Global Scholars, said. "If you feel like you don't know anything about what's happening, it's a very good place to start. I felt like I knew everything, and then I joined and realized I have a lot to learn."

Williams said that in creating the program he, "wanted to do something that would benefit students at the beginning of their career, that they can then carry across the four years that they were here... and enrich their capacity for learning."

> "If you feel like you don't know anything about what's happening, it's a very good place to start. I felt like I knew everything, and then I joined and realized I have a lot to learn."

At the beginning of the year, the Global Scholars brainstormed issues that interested them and skills they wanted to develop. Horning said those topics of interest help inform planning for the rest of the year.

Horning also said that the program focuses on empowering students to solve problems rather than just learn about them.

"We would present some issues and then show how we analyze these issues," Horning said. "And I, as an educator, always felt slightly dissatisfied with leaving the conversation there for students and just wishing them well on commencement, like good luck, it's a tough world out there. I'm grabbing this opportunity to offer a solutionist approach to the problems early on."

Global Scholar Ciara Murphy '25 said she values the lessons she has learned so far and anticipates the rest of the year will build off her experiences.

"The exposure to students from different backgrounds is the biggest gain from this program," Murphy said. "It really emphasizes how global Middlebury is. I hope to learn... from my classmates and how that can make me a better student, a better scientist, and even a better person."

Horning and Williams are still developing a plan for winter and spring terms. They discussed ideas for the future, like a student symposium or off-campus travel to Monterey or another location. They also envision the current class of Global Scholars returning to serve as mentors to the new students. Some students expressed their enthusiasm for this opportunity and look forward to guiding future students through the program.

"I do want to continue to be part of the Rohatyn Center in any way I can, through different programs and events," Ibraahim said. "Even though I haven't been a part of it for that long, I see myself continuing it,"

Horning and Williams are also looking forward to the rest of the year and building on their current work. They praised the school's administration for their support for the creation and development of the program and anticipate its growth in the coming years.

"This is one of several new initiatives that the Rohatyn Center has launched," Williams said. "I can see the [RGS] cohort expanding over time and envision the effects of what we do having a real impact on students' experiences and lives in the college. And for me, that's a very meaningful thing."

Snow Bowl seasonal pop-up shop opens on Middlebury's campus

By ALEC GONG
Contributing Writer

An extension of the Middlebury Snow Bowl Seasonal Pop-up Shop is now open for business in Proctor basement, which before spring 2020 housed the Middlebury College Store.

Derick Cram, the ski shop manager, and Randall Bigelow, the Snow Bowl's ticket salesman, currently run the store, which popped up in November and will be disassembled at the end of the semester.

In the past, Cram and Bigelow's primary focus was the ski shop in the Snow Bowl lodge, which offers day rentals of skiing supplies. A second shop was set up at the Kirk Alumni Center in 2019, which has been moved for the first time to the center of campus.

"I think the main reason for having [the Pop-Up Shop] here [in the Proctor Basement] is to improve access for the students, and subsequently, the general public as well," Cram said.

Unlike the shop on the mountain, where space is limited by square footage and cluttered with apparel boxes, the Pop-Up Shop on campus offers easier access to a wider array of products. Currently, the shop is selling everything a skier needs, like ski jackets, pants, gloves, goggles, helmets, boots, poles and skis. Also on sale is a variety of Snow Bowl themed gifts and collectibles such as postcards, coffee mugs, pint glasses and stickers.

"And new stuff is coming every day," Cram said.

Besides retail, the Pop-Up Shop also provides seasonal leasing and fitting services. The pandemic has changed how services are offered, and online appointments have now been implemented. This enables shop assistants to give customers their undivided attention, according to Cram.

"By the time the snow flies, it's like gangbusters. It's like a revolving door, people are constantly coming in," Cram said.

Leading up to Dec. 1, Bigelow has processed more than eight hundred orders for the early-bird rate for the ski passes. He expects more orders to come flooding in from college students as the ski season starts and people begin purchasing ski passes during J-Term.

This year, the Snow Bowl is offering passes to first years free of charge, hoping to encourage a large number of new students to make memories at the mountain. To sign up, first-year students can email their names, student ID numbers and a pass photo to the Snow Bowl email address.

"But be very careful with the photo you submit," Bigelow joked. "One young man sent a picture of him next to a golden seal. We liked the golden seal better, so his ski pass is the golden seal."

Cram and Bigelow have a core team of more than 50 staff members working at the Snow Bowl. The crew exceeds 150 with instructors, ski patrol members and kitchen staff included.

Merchandise in the Pop-Up Shop comes from an overstock of prior years, which has greatly increased in quantity due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of these products satisfy the needs of general consumers, unlike some shops in the area that cater to more high-end customers.

Cram selects his products so that his merchandise does not overlap with those of another store. For instance, if one shop carries Darn Tough socks, the Pop-Up Shop will go for another brand, like Fox River.

"We try to be mindful of what is going on in town and try not to step on other businesses," Cram said.

The Pop-Up Shop will remain open until the break begins at the end of the fall semester. After that, everything will be put away for the possible return of the campus bookstore. In the future, Cram wishes to set up something more permanent. His ultimate goal is to establish a full-time, year-round shop in town or on campus that is accessible in the pre-season, post-season and perhaps the offseason as well.

"Maybe [the shop] will be some combination of ski and golf," Cram said.

With J-term just around the corner, Cram and Bigelow are offering a final pre-season sale. There is currently a five percent discount off all retail purchases and any student that signs up for a season lease will get 20 percent off a helmet.

ABIGAIL CHANG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Snow Bowl pop-up shop in the basement of Proctor Dining Hall.

Student-organized marathon raises over $2,600 for Hunger Free Vermont

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Sophomores Youness Cheboubi '24 and Malick Thiam '24 organized and ran in a marathon on Sunday, Nov. 21 that raised over $2,600 for Hunger Free Vermont, a local organization that fights food injustice and malnutrition. Dozens of students came out to help run sections of the marathon and kept morale high throughout the event.

The duo's running adventures began this past summer when Thiam ran a half-marathon in New York City and put out a call on Instagram to have people come out and join. Cheboubi, who lives in New Jersey, came out to run part of the half-marathon with him.

"My thinking was when I had done that half-marathon, it was mentally a lot easier to have people like Youness pull up in the middle and help you get through the last few miles," Thiam said.

He approached Cheboubi with the idea of running an entire marathon this semester, and Cheboubi, eager to cross running a marathon off of his bucket list, agreed. The two decided that they wanted to run for charity and came across Hunger Free Vermont after an internet search.

> "My thinking was when I had done that half-marathon, it was mentally a lot easier to have people like Youness pull up in the middle and help you get through the last few miles."

The plans for the marathon came together over the month of November. Cheboubi and Thiam set up a GoFundMe with the initial goal of raising $500. They approached Student Government Association President Roni Lezama '22 with their idea, and the College donated $300 to the effort. The Center for Community Engagement also provided an additional $200 that Cheboubi and Thiam spent on snacks and other supplies for the 26.2-mile run.

With race day fast approaching, Cheboubi and Thiam started advertising the marathon around campus and online, creating a promotional video and a website at go/middmarathon. Students were invited to sign up to run with them online. The duo mapped out locations where students could join at multiple points: for the half marathon, the six miles, the last two miles or the final mile.

> "We're not runners. You don't have to be a runner to join."

Cheboubi and Thiam did some training runs but stressed their own newness to the sport.

"We're not runners," Cheboubi said. "You don't have to be a runner to join."

On Nov. 21, Cheboubi, Thiam and other students began the long run by Fusile Field. They picked a flat route by Creek Road.

"We had a surprising amount of people join for each portion," Cheboubi said. "If it were just me and Malick, I think we would have fared way worse." Dozens of people joined for the last couple of miles, running with the duo back to campus.

The duo agreed that running passed quicker than they expected. "After three hours, I did not feel like three hours had gone by," Thiam said. "You're so in the moment."

The pair were pleased to finish under four hours with a time of 3:52, which was one of their goals. After the marathon, they celebrated in the McCullough tent with donuts, and a representative from Hunger Free Vermont came to share some information about the organization. Cheboubi and Thiam were exhausted and limping the day after, but spirits were high. "Same time tomorrow?" Cheboubi joked at the after-party.

> "After three hours, I did not feel like three hours had gone by. You're so in the moment."

"That was really heartwarming to see everyone there," Cheboubi said. Although there are no immediate plans for another Midd Marathon, Cheboubi and Thiam were appreciative of the support from the community and are open to the possibility of planning or attending another event in the future.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADAM ADNAN ISMAIL

Youness Cheboubi '24 and Malick Thiam '24 finishing the last couple miles with the support of other students.

Karen Duguay, executive director of Experience Middlebury, wins county chamber of commerce award

By JULIA PEPPER
Local Editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN DUGUAY

Karen Duguay is the executive director of Experience Middlebury.

Karen Duguay, executive director of Experience Middlebury, was honored with the Buster Brush Citizen of the Year Award at the annual Addison County Chamber of Commerce awards ceremony on Oct. 28 for her essential contributions to Neighbors, Together (NT), a community action group that supported local Middlebury businesses while the key stages of the Bridge & Rail Project inhibited the flow of traffic through downtown last year. Duguay was also recognized for her work as an administrator through the Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP).

Because of Duguay's work — along with thousands of hours invested by over 1,500 volunteers, feedback from town members and collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), which is responsible for the new train line — NT was able to give substantial support to the town of Middlebury through the construction. The group was successful despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and in their success, created something of a blueprint for other towns throughout the country facing similar challenges.

Describing her role, Duguay explained that she has a background in non-profit work and that she has worked for BMP for almost nine years. After a group started by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to mitigate the effects of the Bridge & Rail project received funding from VTrans, Duguay was hired by the town of Middlebury as the sole staff member to oversee the volunteer group. In this role, Duguay was responsible for many logistical tasks, such as handling money and execution of plans, and she worked closely with the group's co-chairs, Nancy Malcolm and Linda Horn, to ensure the community's values were upheld.

"I have always been interested in trying to find positions that benefit the community I live in, and [NT] checks a lot of those boxes," Duguay said. "I have probably the best job in that I am able to work to make my own community better, which is really fulfilling work."

When asked about her favorite achievement from the project, Duguay spoke about collaboration.

"One of the most valuable things we were able to do is to show what's able to be done when people work together, leaving all ego at the door," she said. "This group of people — stakeholders, businesses, organizations, individuals — really had one interest in mind: to help Middlebury."

Duguay added that the partnerships built during this process will lead to long-lasting relationships. She also felt NT was able to shift community members' perspectives on the Bridge & Rail Project and was a strong example of what community action groups can accomplish.

That statement was echoed by Jim Gish, community liaison for the Bridge & Rail Project. Gish served as a representative from the local community and communicates with VTrans, the government agency funding the B&R project, on behalf of the town. Gish worked closely with Duguay, as well as Malcolm and Horn. Gish described this work as an "opportunity to be creative and come up with practices that could work in Middlebury and around the country," emphasizing that NT has been "indispensable."

His favorite project NT led was Bundle, a pop-up event space in downtown. Gish explained Bundle was funded through a VTrans grant. Bundle temporarily turned an empty storefront into a pop-up shop where artisans and craftspeople displayed their work for sale and where different workshops and seminars were held.

"It was a really interesting take on how downtown might host a shifting set of events to bring people downtown," Gish said.

Malcolm described her volunteer work as "one of the most satisfying and fun experiences," recalling that she and others called their group "The Dream Team." She said one of the group's biggest accomplishments was "turning around the [town's] negative attitude about the project and replacing it with a genuine work-together community effort."

Malcolm mentioned more key accomplishments, as referenced in NT's final report.

"We can directly account for a very conservative $615,000 return on the $303,000 state grant investment," Malcolm said. "This return does not include any of the money that went toward regional marketing and website building, advancing the use of our local currency 'Middlebury Money,' filling some empty storefronts, etc."

Duguay also said that NT put on 110 different events and set up flowers and fence art to make the downtown area look nicer during construction, alongside posting helpful redirection signage as the routes through town changed.

Duguay said the project actually brought in approximately two or three times as much money as that.

Still, the pandemic brought previously unthinkable challenges to NT. "We were dealing with things we had never seen before and were forced to adapt on the fly," Duguay said. "It was challenging, and at times really frustrating, but I'm really proud of the fact that we didn't stop ... I'm especially proud of our ability to adapt to the circumstances."

NT, as a group, had a clear beginning and end, with its operations coinciding with the thick of the Bridge & Rail Project construction. As the group's work has now concluded, NT put together a report of their accomplishments that can be used as something of a blueprint for other towns facing similar circumstances.

In the future, Dugay will continue to work for BMP on such things like community events, block parties and more. After working so intensely for seven years, Malcolm plans to "take a breather." Because of NT's immense success, however, the positive effects of this group will be felt for years to come.

News in Brief

Vermont reports 1,667 cases over five-day holiday break

Continued from Page 1

When looking at the 14-day average for new cases in Vermont, the data suggests a fall in total cases over the past week by 12%. But testing rates have also dropped by 12%, which means that this total case count could be an underrepresentation of the number of existing cases.

According to VT Digger, the one-day positivity rate — the rate at which administered tests came back positive — jumped to 8.7% on Thanksgiving, although the seven-day average sat lower at 4.5%. The positivity rate on that date is the highest since April 2020, even prior to today's expanded testing protocols.

Four deaths were reported over the weekend. As of Nov. 30, 84 Vermonters were hospitalized with Covid-19, including 24 who were sent to the ICU. Concerns about the availability of beds, as well as understaffing resulting in inability to meet patient needs then rose with Tuesday's record.

"The crisis some of us feared is here," State Rep. George Till, D-Jericho, wrote in a Tuesday email to VT Digger. "We're turning down transports from outlying hospitals in record numbers as are other tertiary care hospitals in the region."

The VDOH also said that it is monitoring the spread of the new Omicron variant in a press conference with Governor Scott on Tuesday. Omnicron is a mutation of the coronavirus that the WHO designated a "variant of concern" on Nov. 26, meaning that it is potentially more highly transmissible, could result in more severe complications or could show reduced responsiveness to the vaccine.

When looking at the 14-day average for new cases in Vermont, the data suggests a fall in total cases over the past week by 12%. But testing rates have also dropped by 12%.

Vermont Health Commissioner Mark Levine issued a statement that no Omicron cases have yet been recognized in the state of Vermont. In this statement, Levine also encouraged vaccinated Vermonters to seek their booster shots if eligible.

Managing Editor Lucy Townend contributed reporting.

Local businesses open up for Midd Night Strolls around downtown Middlebury

By JACK SUMMERSBY & CHARLIE KEOHANE
Local Editor & Editor at Large

Take a "Midd Night Stroll" through downtown Middlebury on Dec. 2, 9 and 16 from 5–8 p.m., for an evening of extended shopping and events with promotions, prizes and new pop-ups. After cancellations last year due to concerns about the potential spread of Covid-19, many local businesses and organizations are excited for the return of this annual tradition.

Middlebury has come together for this special holiday season shopping event for over a decade. The event, organized by Experience Middlebury, will consist of special deals, products, and raffles. There will also be opportunities for customers to obtain Middlebury Money, a kind of currency that is legal tender at downtown businesses. Dozens of businesses from Sweet Cecily to the Vermont Bookstore to Frog Hollow Bikes are opening their doors to customers.

The festivities will include free hot chocolate and popcorn, an artisan market with local makers and fire heaters. This is part of Experience Middlebury's Very Merry Middlebury holiday planning, which will also include a Santa and Mrs. Claus event on Dec. 4 as well as decorations downtown.

Experience Middlebury encourages all customers to practice Covid-19-safe behavior and to respect store policies surrounding capacity limits and masks. Folks can also expect less food and drink samples this year due to Covid-19 concerns.

Despite some restrictions, local businesses are excited that Midd Night Strolls are back. Dan McIntosh of The Middlebury Shop, formerly Forth n' Goal, is looking forward to welcoming Middlebury residents and students this year.

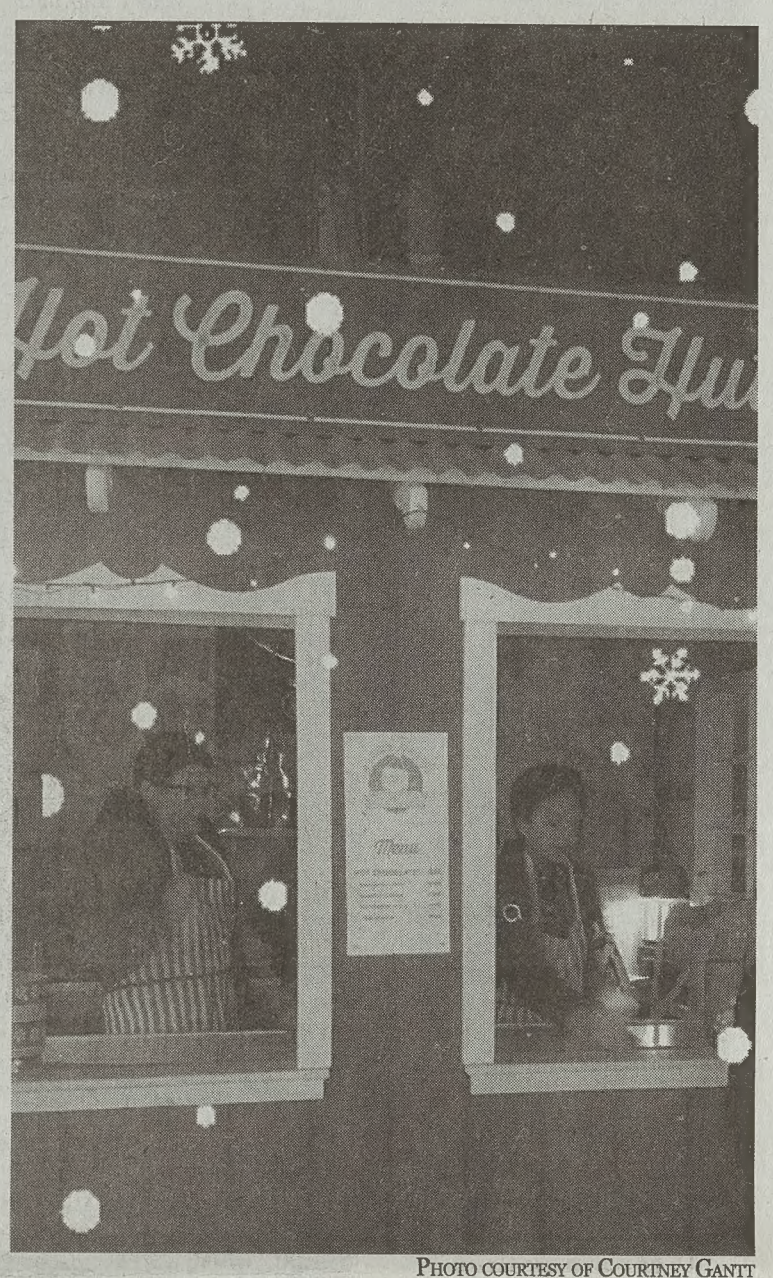

PHOTO COURTESY OF COURTNEY GANTT
The Hot Chocolate Hut (pictured above) was a feature of Midd Night Strolls in previous years.

"People look forward to it, and it encouraged them to shop local and come out at night," McIntosh said. "We've had great turnout these last couple years."

Karen Duguay, head of Experience Middlebury, hopes that event will help connect people with downtown Middlebury.

"The thing that I love about the event is that it's a really wonderful way to support local businesses, but also a big community builder," Duguay said.

Students can go visit Experience Middlebury's website for the full list of promotions and specials.

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The Middlebury Campus

A renewed call for testing and flexibility as the pandemic evolves

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

After many of us struggled through a year in which connection was, understandably, limited by strict Covid-19 guidelines, this semester's return to (near) normalcy has in many ways been a relief. We missed sitting in Proc for hours, attending in-person classes and watching our peers compete in home athletic competitions.We're grateful for these opportunities to connect. But as we strive to create a new normal and redefine what it means to exist in community together this year, it has sometimes felt like we're ignoring the elephant in the room.

The pandemic is not over. Last month, Vermont reported its highest single-day case counts since the start of the pandemic — breaking its new daily case record twice. In Addison County, cases have risen by 80% in the last two weeks. And here at the college, despite our high vaccination rates and indoor masking protocols, we've seen our highest numbers for simultaneous active cases in the past few weeks, peaking at 13 during Thanksgiving break. And of course, many are concerned about the potential threat of the new Omicron variant.

With these factors in mind, we are renewing our call for a more robust testing strategy and increased flexibility in course modality.

Increased Covid-19 testing

The college has stated that its testing program will be "evaluated and adjusted as needed." In an email sent to the Middlebury community on Sept. 30, Middlebury cited several factors in their decision-making process, including the effectiveness of vaccines, the prevalence of Covid-19 in Addison County and Vermont, and "new developments in the pandemic."

This moment — when cases are reaching new highs in the state, the county and at the college — seems like the moment to re-evaluate our testing strategy. The college says it has the resources to test all students. Regardless of whether administrators believe we have surpassed the threshold after which we need to reconsider testing, we are asking for change. In light of new developments in the pandemic, we're not doing enough.

Given the rising prevalence of Covid-19 on campus and in our surrounding communities, the risk of an outbreak seems more pressing than ever. In our first editorial of the year, we called for a comprehensive Covid-19 testing strategy, much like that of last spring, where students were required to test twice weekly. In our September editorial, we wrote that this would allow for detection of cases, both asymptomatic and symptomatic, and would give students adequate information about the state of Covid-19 on campus in order to make the best assessments of risk.

In light of the prevalence of Covid-19 in the state of Vermont, we are renewing our call for mandatory weekly screening testing for all students.

We could also benefit from more opportunities for opt-in asymptomatic testing, like additional days and appointments throughout the week. With opt-in testing usually only available on Mondays, asymptomatic students who want to be tested on other days of the week must wait until the next Monday or rely on resources in town for testing.

We must take intentional and sustainable actions now to maintain the health of our community while maintaining the possibilities for connection that we've had this semester — testing is an integral part of making that happen.

Encouraging flexibility in course modality

Near the end of a fall semester, it's hard to ignore how many of our class meetings involved Zooming in a couple of quarantined students, or "Zoom buddies" pulling up their sick classmates on their laptops. As professors prepared for a fully in-person semester, the infrastructure and syllabus space to accommodate sick or quarantined students just wasn't created.

According to the college, students are encouraged not to attend classes if they are experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19, and faculty have the option to offer a remote component to their otherwise in-person classes to accommodate students who wish or need to attend remotely. While professors are trying their best to incorporate remote students into their classrooms, this is challenging without a top-down approach from the administration that provides adequate guidelines, training and resources.

An emphasis on returning to in-person learning this semester has de-emphasized planning for the possibility that students will need to attend classes remotely. If this will be our reality next semester, it is important that the college's messaging about course and syllabus planning is built around the very plausible possibility that students may get sick and need ways of attending classes remotely. Pretending that in-person courses can exist as they did pre-pandemic ignores the current state of Covid-19 in Vermont and on-campus, and it's time to face this reality in syllabi.

We love and appreciate the conditions of our new "normal." But we want it to be robust and sustainable, and that means accepting that conditions in Vermont have changed. It's far past time for our attitudes and actions to evolve as well.

J-Term should be an opportunity, not a scarcity

Notes from the Desk

***Catherine McLaughlin** '21.5 is a News Editor for The Campus.*

According to an article published in the previous issue of The Campus, during J-Term registration about 963 upperclassmen not involved in independent work attempted to register for 875 available seats in J-Term classes. While these numbers are striking, they don't convey the full impact of what it was like to be one of those upperclassmen. It was chaotic, stressful, and disappointing.

Not only was the J-Term registration process deeply frustrating and contradictory to the entire exploratory purpose of J-Term, but it represents the latest example of how Middlebury has failed to dedicate the adequate resources to support the students, staff, and faculty of its over-enrolled campus.

Per usual, first-years and sophomores registered before upperclassmen. Ahead of registration day, I prepared beyond what I would for a normal semester— I made the maximum amount of plans (preprogrammed schedules) on Banner9 that I could, and I had additional backup options written down if needed. Knowing that many classes would fill up before I got a chance to register, I had emailed professors before even underclassmen had registered, hoping to get a good spot on some waitlists— because usually it is possible to get off the waitlist if you are proactive and enthusiastic.

When it came time to register, I woke up thirty minutes in advance to make sure that my computer was charged and well connected to the internet. At 7 a.m. when registration opened and I tried to enter courses into my Banner9, I was logged out more than five times. Frantically troubleshooting, I did not get the chance to enter in one of my plans until exactly 7:13. In less than fifteen minutes, every single one of my planned and backup courses filled up. Finally, I just pulled up the course catalog and started entering random CRNs into the system, hoping to find an open class.

I eventually found one, but later that day, realizing that I already dreaded taking the course, decided to drop it and give one of the students on the waitlist my seat.

Without a J-Term class, I spent the next few weeks emailing and visiting professors, hoping to get off their waitlists, making sure they knew that this was to be my last semester and that I was not yet registered. "Are you a major in this department or a first-year?" they all asked me. When I responded 'no,' they politely hinted that I had no chance of getting into their course.

Many upperclassmen, as a result of the insufficient number of J-Term seats, ended up without a class, forced to come up with an independent study, or given very few options for what they could take— courses they, respectfully, have no interest in.

It should not be like this.

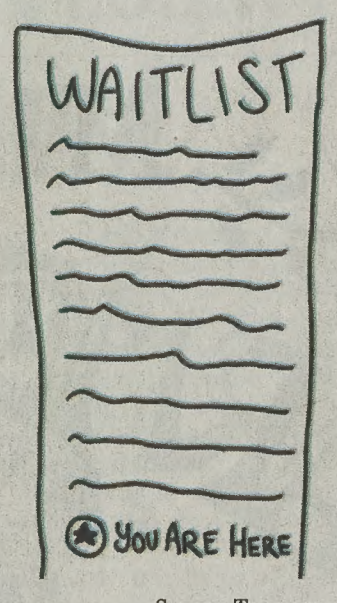
Beyond being infuriating and defeating on a personal level, the registration process this year profoundly contradicts what J-Term— a program that Middlebury touts as part of what makes it special and unique— is supposed to be about.

J-Term is meant, by offering a wide range of classes on unconventional and exciting topics, to give students the opportunity to take unique courses only offered in J-Term or try-out a new subject area. Being forced to sign-up for one of few remaining classes, or one of a handful of limited, last-minute course additions, is not the same as having the chance to explore new and unconventional class topics. J-Term this year for upperclassmen was not about opportunity and exploration; it sent the message to tuition-paying members of this community that "you get what you get and you don't get upset."

There should be more than enough available seats in J-Term courses for students to preserve the ability of students to have some element of choice. There should be enough offerings that every student can find something they have at least moderate interest in. How many students are signed-up for something that is not required for their major, not giving them a distribution requirement, and not something remotely exciting or interesting to them?

Furthermore, having every single class full to bursting puts undue stress on professors, who are frantically fielding pleas from students like me, begging them to expand their class capacity beyond its already taxing number. I spoke with several professors who expressed empathy for my situation but did not feel they could handle any more students. What kind of J-Term have they been set-up for?

The college attempted to mitigate the shortage by adding four classes at the start of the add/drop period. Because this was during the add/drop period, students would have to contact the professors and get their approval to join to get into these classes. Two days after these classes became available, any student not registered for a class or on a waitlist would be automatically opted out of J-Term. With many professors maintaining their own waitlists, it was difficult to know whether my status on several waitlists would be conveyed to the registrar. I emailed them pleading to not be placed on opt out status.



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There is, of course, always the option of an independent study (which is my current plan). While I am grateful to the professor who agreed to supervise me last-minute, this is not what independent studies are about. They are meant to allow students excited about a particular topic to investigate it in-depth. They are not meant to be a frantic, last-minute back-up plan because there are no open seats in regular classes.

The college, as with all over-enrollment issues this year, should have seen this coming. They have ways of ascertaining the number of students planning to be on campus in January, and know exactly the number of seats available in J-Term. It probably was quite difficult, as the college told The Campus, to convince visiting professors to teach at Middlebury this winter. But we have the technology for online courses. Being registered for an intellectually exciting and unique online course is better than not being registered at all, or being registered for an unwanted in-person class. There is no excuse.

When tuition rises every year at a school that calls itself elite and markets itself on its intellectual offerings, meeting the basic needs of students should not be an issue. All students should be able to, on the day of class registration, actually register for a class.

Kvetching about meal plans

Op-Ed

***Liam Hahn and Nate Bluenthal** are members of the class of 2021.5.*

Listen up schmucks, it's time for some more truth from your favorite Jewish classmates. By this point we assume you're familiar with our work, we're a couple of Jewish Americans and we like to complain, or as we call it in our culture, kvetch. You can kvetch about silly things, like cold Matzo ball soup. Or you can kvetch about serious things that should really change, like a total overhaul of the Proctor Dining Hall heating system. In this weekly column, we're going to try and keep it light and complain about the little things that, if changed, could make the lives of Midd students just a bit easier. We'll leave the big issues to the Editorial Board and kvetch about the small ones.

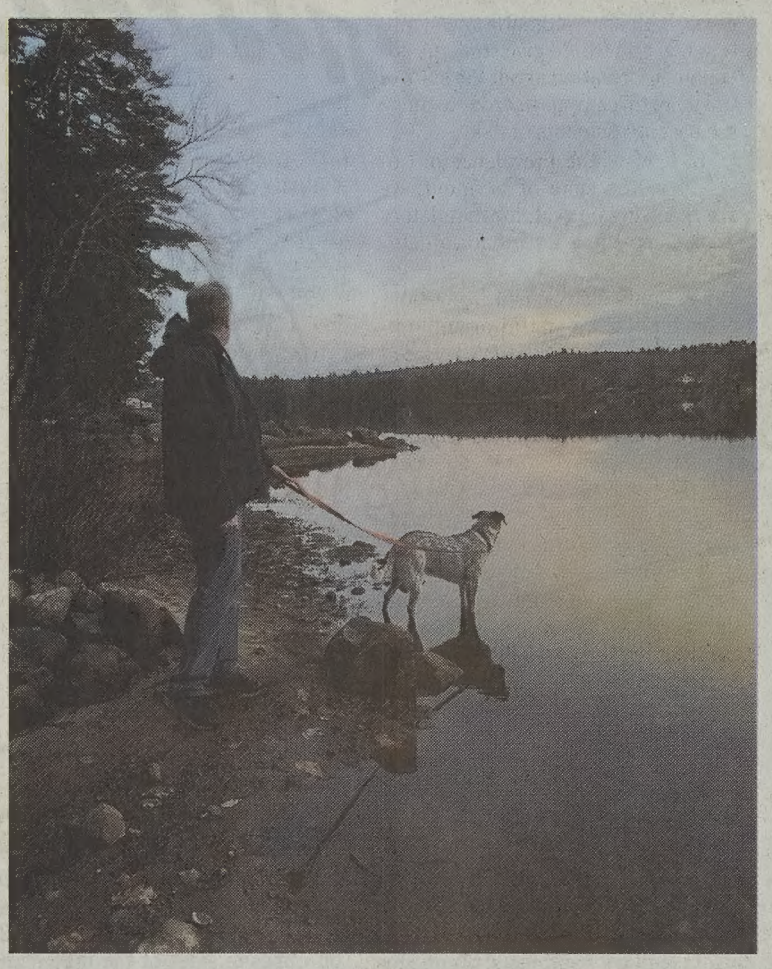
Nothing winds our dreidel quite like a raw deal, and quite frankly, we believe that our fellow MiddKids are at the receiving end of a deal so raw, it still has a heartbeat.

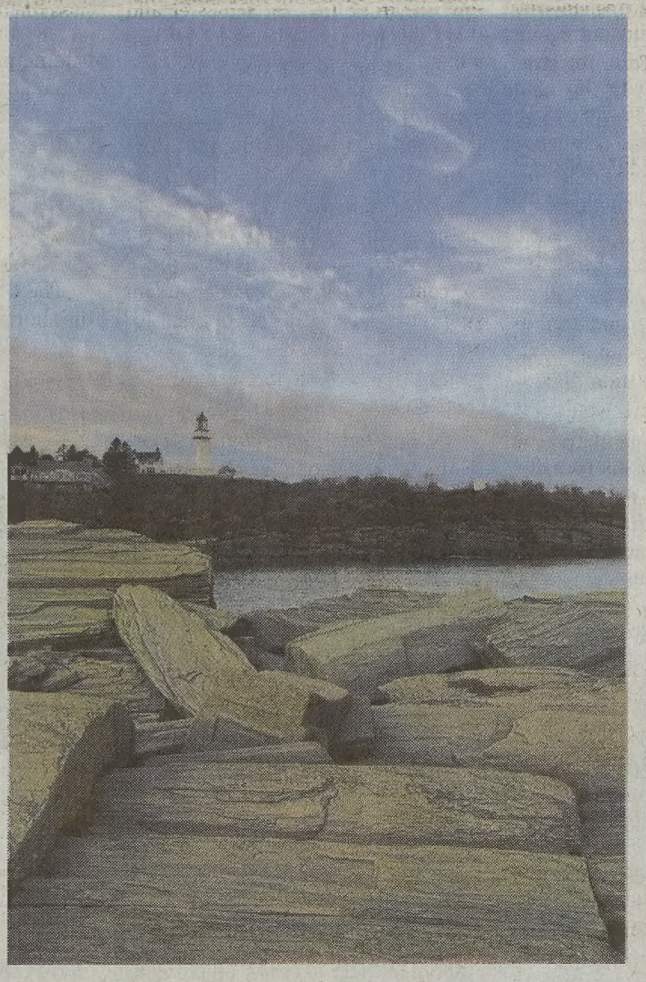
As many of you know, there's no better place to schmooze with friends than the Middlebury dining halls. They have everything – bagels, unsalted matzo crackers and friendly faces to greet you as you walk in. But not all are welcome in these establishments this year, at least not with the previously arranged agreements enjoyed in years past. Like our trousers after eating a full seder, this school is ready to burst at the seams. Thus, it's no surprise that the administration shoveled as many seniors off campus as possible. "Wonderful," we seniors rejoiced. "What a mitzvah it is to live off campus with one's closest friends, at least we'll be able to buy our meal swipes and enter the dining halls with ease as was promised by the all-giving dining hall overseers to our bygone compatriots."

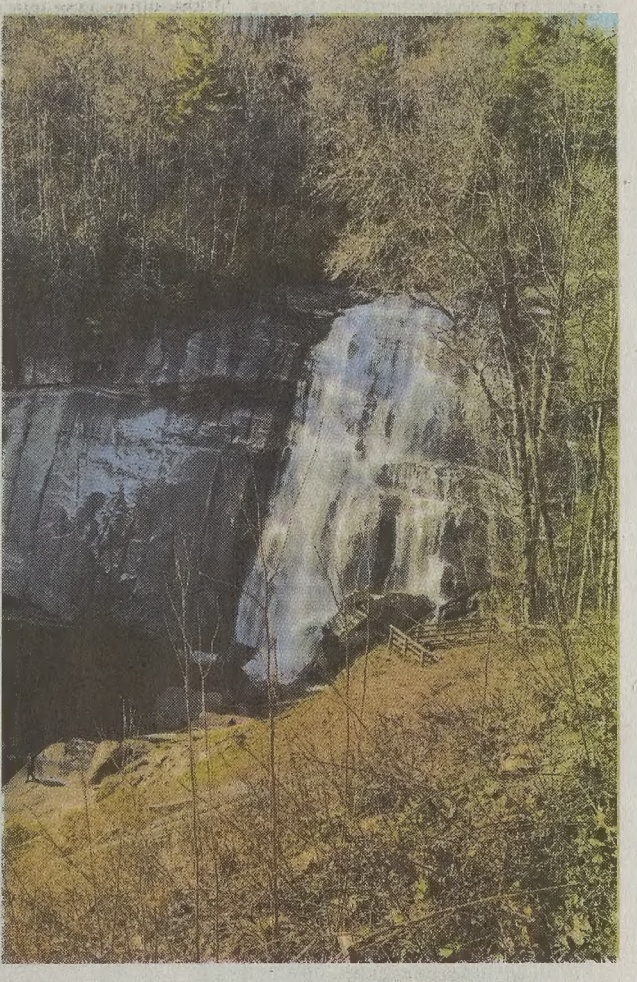
They must take us for a bunch of schlubs to think that there would not be a tumult when we discovered that this system is no more. Off-campus students used to be able to participate in the meal plan, but the administration banned these students from any participation this year. It takes a lot of chutzpah to cast upon us the plague of declining balance. Long gone are the days of meal swipes bought in bulk (quite a bargain, you must admit); in their place we are faced with the much more real charge of declining balance for each meal. Cast away as Moses in the desert, we schlep to the dining halls and bang on the windows, hoping some mensch will let us in for a warm meal. Do us a favor Middlebury: when campus has fewer students in the spring, let off-campus folks have their fair share of grub.

We feel the shame of our actions only surmounted by the hunger in our bellies for that which we crave — a subpar panini in Proc hastily made under the glare of some quadruple legacy squash player hungry for his quesadilla. We understand that the dining halls are overburdened — to no fault of our own, mind you (no one asked our opinion on how many Nobles kids to accept this year), and we have nothing but love in our washed-up hearts for the staff who have to deal with your inability to count — but we are not naive. We realize that you messed up; who doesn't from time to time? You let a few too many of us come back and now there's no space, truly a shande. But we, the two most opinionated Jews on campus, think it's high time to cut your losses and let there be food to nosh on for all students. Maybe we should even return to the fabled days of old in which meal swipes were merely a frightening tale from those pesky peer-institutions of ours. Is it so much to ask? Also, it's hanukkah, and if there aren't good latkes in the dining halls, you'll be hearing from us.

From Maine to New York to North Carolina, here are some photos of the views and company Campus Editors had over last week's break:







Photos courtesy of Brinlea La Barge, Lucy Townend, Daleelah Saleh, Maggie Connoly, Catherine McLaughlin, Riley Board & Ideal Dowling.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN: BURLINGTON-BASED PROFESSORS WHO COMMUTE

By JACQUELINE QIU
Contributing Writer

Despite the college's remote location, not all college faculty live in Middlebury proper. Among professors, there is a growing community of "commuters" who live outside of the town, many of them in the Burlington area, but still work at the college.

While there are logistical challenges to commuting to work in such a rural state, like coordinating a busy schedule with sporadic bus times or beginning a commute at 6:45 a.m. during harsh Vermont winters, the professors The Campus spoke to are content with their decisions to seek residence in Burlington. Whether seeking a balanced personal and professional life or finding a home in a more active, vibrant environment than small-town Middlebury, there is a theme of intentionality to working and living in a different place.

Professor of Political Science Betram Johnson lives in the southernmost part of Burlington. Many other Middlebury professors also live in Burlington, given the straightforward, 45-minute commute via U.S. Route 7.

"I lived in Middlebury the first four years that I taught here. I did enjoy getting to know the town. I subscribed to the Addison Independent. I went to the Middlebury town meeting every year as an observer," Johnson said. "But I like a little bit of anonymity once in a while. If I go to the grocery store in Burlington, I'm probably not going to run into a student."

Anonymity is not the only benefit that living outside of Middlebury presents. Due to the inherent geographic distance from the college, living elsewhere also creates a physical boundary between professors' personal and professional lives, which can seem nonexistent during a hectic semester.

"The separation [from the College], not living in the same place you work where everyone either works [there] or is a student, is nice," Associate Professor of Sociology Linus Owens, another resident of Burlington, said. Owen noted that being a good professor is often about setting boundaries about being away from work, even as students may expect professors to be constantly available.

"It limits that ability but that is actually not a bad thing. There are boundaries. I think people who are here all the time get burnt out," Owens said.

Additionally, professors shared how living in a city has certain perks. Johnson highlighted the multiplicity of opportunities within a city to enjoy diverse interests, such as live music performances, art shows and museums. Furthermore, living in a city offers more in terms of comfort, affordability and diversity.

Director and Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies Laurie Essig believes her family is more comfortable and safe in Burlington.

"I was a single lesbian mom when I started [at Middlebury], and I'm a Jew," she said. "I just don't think I could have sent my kids to the Middlebury schools. I'm glad they grew up in Burlington where there are lots of queer families and single queer parents, and as much racial and class diversity as is possible in Vermont."

Despite these benefits, there are still challenges to commuting to the college for work during the day. Johnson, Owens and Essig used to frequently take the Middlebury Link Express bus that had flexible departure times before route times became scarce and inconvenient due to complications from Covid-19. Time on the bus fortunately allowed for an organic community bonding environment to form among colleagues who normally would not bump into each other on campus.

Since the bus has become more inconvenient, professors are now reliant on personal vehicles or carpooling. That means that schedules have to match — which is often uncommon — and makes it harder to participate in evening talks, student performances or other social activities on campus.

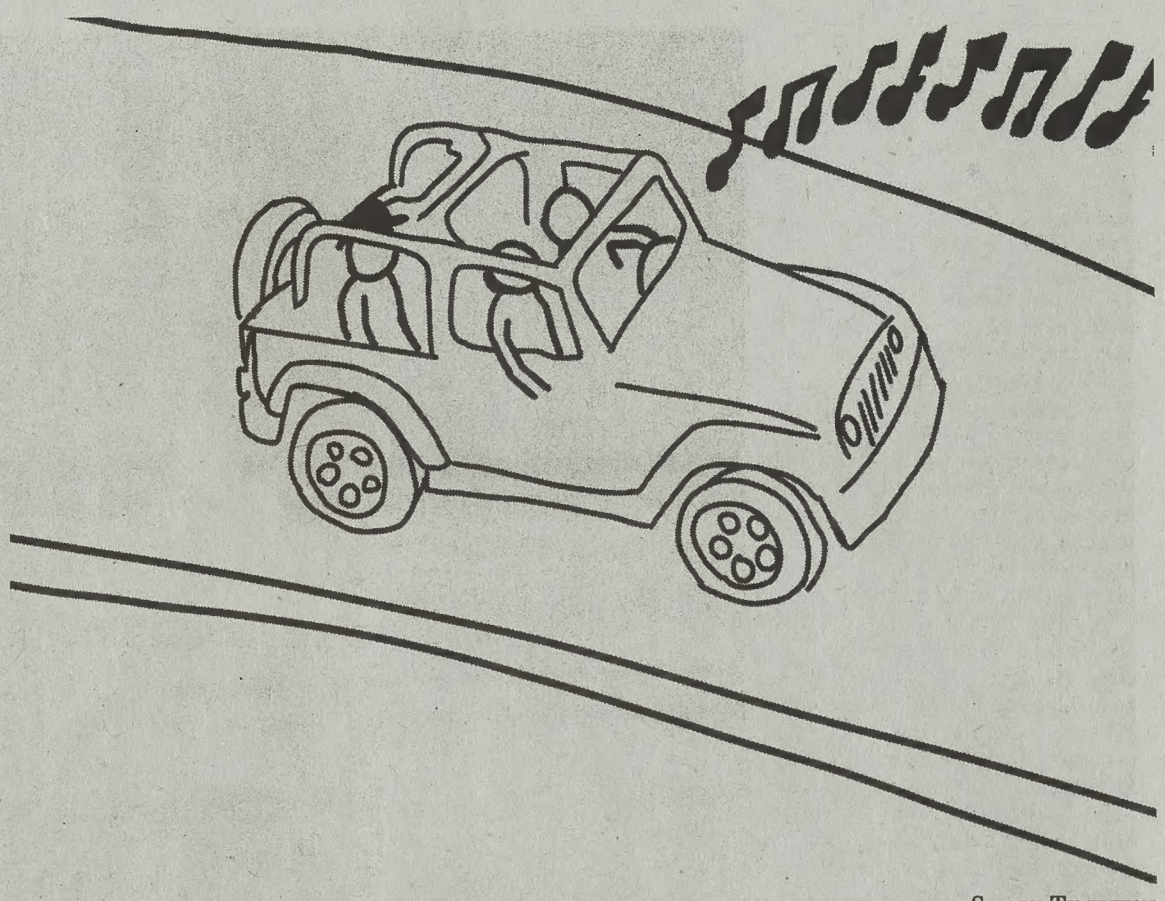
Owens noted that it can be difficult to attend student performances and events that often take place after the final bus leaves Middlebury. Additionally, for some, there are logistical challenges with classes, office hours and faculty meetings. Owens said that it is harder for him to schedule his classes, which can act as an inconvenience for his colleagues.

Yet, for some, like Assistant Professor of Economics Akhil Rao, a South Burlington resident, class schedules remain unaffected by personal residences outside of Middlebury. He explained that even if he did not live in South Burlington, his class schedule would not change.

"I tend not to schedule things after 4-5 p.m. mostly from personal preference — I prefer to do interactive work during the daylight hours and set evenings aside for other things."

Rao also affirmed the practical side of living outside of Middlebury, especially for those with families, despite the costly side of commuting in terms of time and money. He would prefer to be within walking distance of city amenities or have robust public transit to commute by bus or train.

"My partner commutes to Waterbury. Living in South Burlington balances our individual commute times," he said.



SABRINA TEMPLETON

"It is nice to be close to Burlington and its amenities, but the main reason we live here is because we work on opposite sides of the mountains. It is also easier to find rental housing and multifamily units in Burlington."

While it may seem more convenient for all Middlebury professors to live in the town of Middlebury, this is not the reality.

Owens believes the administration could offer more support for professors who, for many reasons, choose to live elsewhere in Vermont. In his opinion, the college would be able to attract more diverse faculty if they encouraged a less monolithic perspective on residency.

Spin Doctor: "Retribution"

By YARDENA CARMI
Columnist

Tanya Tagaq is a songwriter, artist, activist and author born in Nunavut, Canada. Her vocal style draws heavily on Inuit throat singing, known as katajjaq, a game played by two women sitting face-to-face and a cultural practice she experienced while growing up. Tagaq developed her own solo throat singing technique out of necessity when she found herself without a singing partner during young adulthood. She uses this skill to create passionate, genre-defying music, as experienced on her 2016 album "Retribution." The songs on "Retribution" flow seamlessly into one another, combining this ancient art form with avant-garde sonic experimentation. The album's sound is also deeply rooted in collaboration, featuring contributions from many other Canadian and Indigenous performers. At its core is a call for awareness of Indigenous rights and an end to environmental destruction, interrelated causes that Tagaq has advocated for throughout her career.

On "Ajaaja," her delicate, sweet intro transitions into a traditional Inuit naming song sung by Canadian artist Ruben Komangapik, which Tagaq has underlaid with ambient drums. On "Nacreous," she crafts a pulsing, multi-layered duet with Tuvan throat singer Radik Tyulyush, drawing on the Indigenous folk music of ethnic Tuvans in Russia. "Retribution" is an album that treasures the human voice in all of its strength and possibilities and honors the body as both a vessel and crucial component of the vocal instrument. Tagaq and her collaborators' singing remains deeply personal while also incorporating tones and articulations that reflect the natural world.

Despite its organic sound, "Retribution" is not a peaceful record. If anything, it's the opposite. Tagaq demonstrates her punk mentality on the album's titular track, which stacks Tagaq's singing over a spoken word performance that speaks out against oil drilling in the Arctic and environmental destruction in the name of greed. "Money has spent us," she coos. The energy builds throughout the song, carried by a fiddle accompaniment, until it breaks into vocals and an electric guitar that sound like they should be echoing in a stadium. This energy is paralleled in "Aorta," which is twice as rageful as any metal song you've ever heard. Tagaq's screams are piercing, echoing over driving drums and plenty of instrumental fuzz and distortion.

Tagaq also taps into genres beyond traditional Inuit melodies and rock. The album's midpoint, fittingly titled "Centre," is definitely the track from this project that I come back to the most. Featuring the Canadian rapper Shad, it is the part of "Retribution" that holds up the best to listening out of context. Its classic hip-hop beat easily fits into playlists and everyday listening (and the music video is also really fun). It, of course, includes a few twists on hip-hop form through Tagaq's katajjaq accompaniment and its sampling of nature sounds, such as cawing ravens.

"Retribution" stresses the relationships between environmental issues and exploitation faced by Canada's Indigenous communities in ways that are both lyrical and literal. "Cold" employs strikingly scientific terms to speak out against climate change and remind us of our place in the natural order. It details exactly how catastrophically global warming will unfold, and what its consequences will be. "Human civilization as we know it will no longer exist," Tagaq says in the song. Although it is a warning, Tagaq still finds comfort in the fact that the Earth will continue long after us. The album closer, a cover of Nirvana's 1993 song "Rape Me," is equally chilling. While a nod to her alt-rock influences (check out her tongue-in-cheek cover of the Pixies' "Caribou" from a couple years earlier), Tagaq presents her rendition in protest of the Canadian government's failure to adequately address the issue of violence against Indigenous women. While there is still a lack of exact statistics, thousands of Indigenous girls and women have gone missing in Canada over the past decades, and face a homicide rate that is approximately ten times higher than the rest of Canada's population. Tagaq's version of the famous song is sparse and echoes with whispers, a testament to voices left unheard.

By turns sonically spacious and dense, "Retribution" taps into an ancient artistic practice to tackle the climate crisis and disenfranchisement of Indigenous Canadians with anger and grace. Tagaq's work is a testament to the athleticism and creativity of her voice, capable of roaring catharsis in one moment and soothing gentleness in the next, as well as to her ability to craft corresponding instrumental arrangements. Her next full length album will be out this coming March, and promises to be equally moving.

PIA CONTRERAS

DON'T MISS THIS

She Kills Monsters

The Middlebury Department of Theatre presents this fantastical play by Qui Nguyen, directed by Olga Sanchez Saltveit. Agnes Evans is an average young woman who wishes her life in Athens, Ohio, was less boring. Then, the sudden death of her sister opens the door to a world of adventure. Turns out that her teenage sister Tilly, fascinated with the dark arts — magic, dragons and silly costumes — led a double life as Tillius the Paladin, Dungeons & Dragons healer of the wounded and the protector of lights! Will Agnes cross the threshold, taking up the challenge to find and free the Lost Soul of Athens before it is devoured by the dark forces of darkness forever?

Thursday Dec. 2 to Saturday Dec. 4 at Wright Memorial Theatre. Tickets starting at $5.

Our Return: Fall Dance Concert

"Our Return" is the fall Dance Department concert. See student choreography from Meshi Chavez's Intermediate/Advanced Dance course with lighting done by students in the Production Workshop.

Friday Dec. 3 and Saturday Dec. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the MAC. Tickets starting at $5.

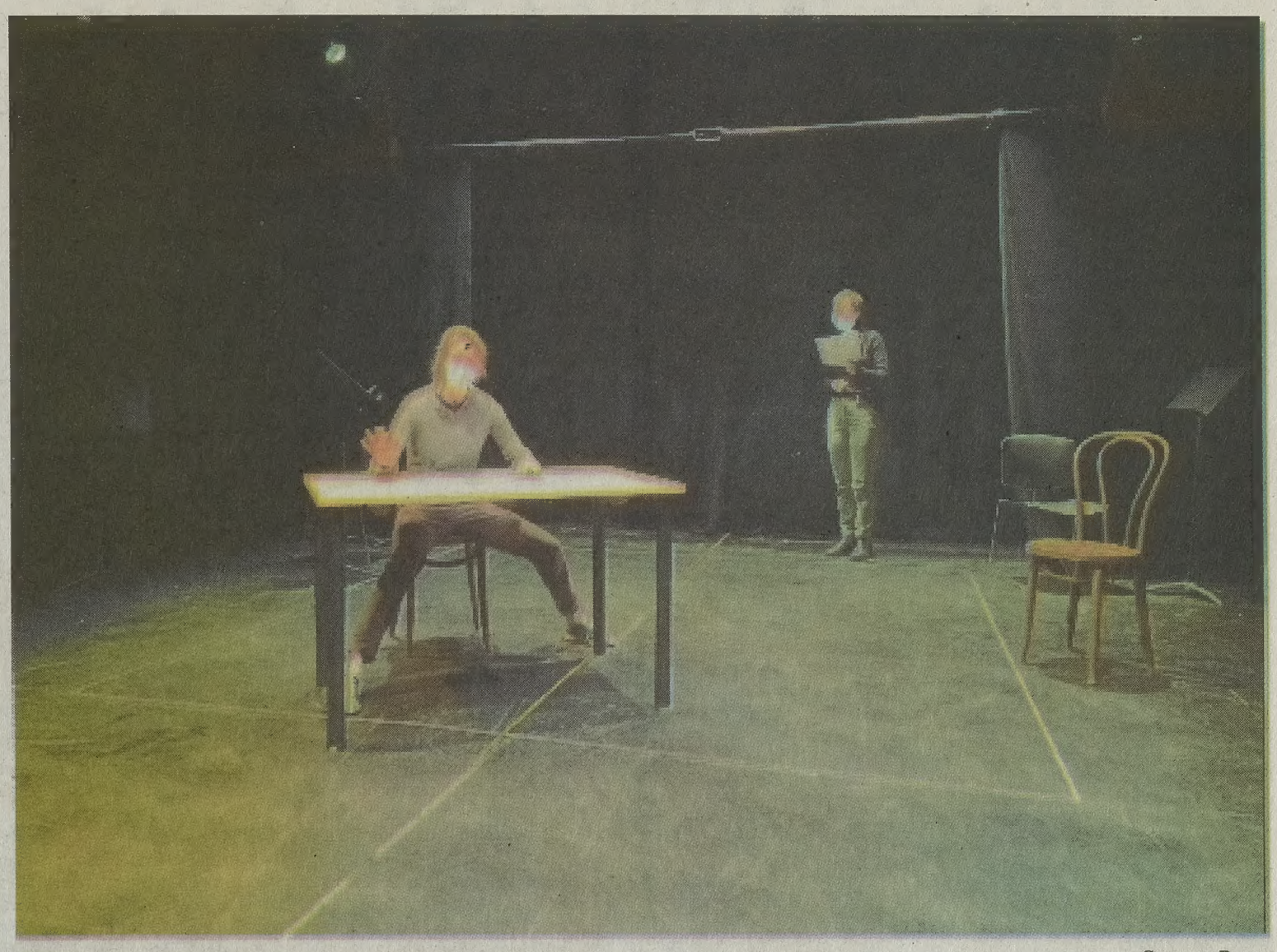
Hive (Zgjoi)

Sundance triple award winner "Hive" is a searing drama based on the true story of Fahrije, who has battled grief and financial struggle since her husband went missing during the war in Kosovo. In hope of providing for her family, she launches a business selling hot pepper preserves, a controversial act of independence that scandalizes her patriarchal village. Amid doubts of her husband's return, she struggles not only to keep her family afloat but against a hostile community who seeks to violently undermine the independence and sisterhood she is determined to gain.

Saturday Dec. 4 at 3 and 8 p.m. at Axinn and online. Free.

The curtain rises on Theatre Think Tank

By SHANE SILVERMAN
Contributing Writer



COURTESY PHOTO

Theatre Think Tank, a new group that meets on the first Friday of every month, offers casual, low-stakes opportunities to participate in the performing arts.

On Friday, Nov. 5, Middlebury College's Theatre Think Tank (TTT) hosted its inaugural meeting. The new group focuses on providing students with a low-stakes environment to share their performing arts talent, including acting, screenplays, improv, stand-up, poetry, drag and everything in between. Students can present their work, sign up for roles in their peers' productions, or even add their names to a list to get a cold call to perform. They now meet on the first Friday of every month at the Hepburn Zoo.

Shortly before the gathering, students began to fill into the cozy Hepburn attic that serves as a retrofitted black box theater. When about fifteen or so people occupied the room, founders Bella Costanion-Carrigan '22, Annabelle Iredale '23.5 and Madison Middleton '22.5, Middlebury's student theatre representatives, gathered the audience's attention and explained the purpose of their project. As students deeply invested in the college's theatre department, they realized how the department's intense time commitments often exclude many talented prospective students from participating in performing arts.

"We wanted to build a community around theatre for everyone by eliminating the time constraints like sports or classes. Now, all you have to do is sign up to get a script or a cold call, and you can perform each month," said Costanion-Carrigan. "We also want it to be a place where people can be vulnerable and share art with a receiving audience to get artistic support."

Theatre Think Tank is meant to be a casual, open space for students to pursue the performing arts, regardless of their talent or art of choice. The organization aims to ease the creative pressures often found when working with faculty in the theater department. "We are a space where you can explore with no fear of judgement. We all just want to have fun and get creative," said Constanion-Carrigan.

"Ideally this space is welcoming to people at all levels of experience and interest in the performing arts. I'd also love to see people bringing in different types of media. TTT is a space for anything and everything: poetry, improv, stand-up comedy, drag and more," Costanion-Carrigan said.

After the commencement speech, the night's performances began. The opening act was a student-written scene by Kayla Schwartz '23.5 set on campus during the first days of the pandemic. As the unforgettable week progresses, the witty characters wrestle with intense fear, continued academic responsibilities and spontaneous sexual connections during their final hours before heading home into the unknown.

> "TTT is a space for anything and everything: poetry, improv, stand-up comedy, drag and more."

Next, the audience was treated to the breakup of two long-term lovers. The heartfelt scene was written by organizer Constanion-Carrigan and tastefully discussed how the permanence of the past directs the course of the future, integrating comedy and theatrical absurdity with the very real emotions of a dying romance. The third scene was a presentation of Masha Makutonina's '21.5 screenplay, presented with two contrasting reiterations. After watching both, the audience was then invited to share their thoughts on the two, demonstrating the think tank nature of the program.

The night closed out with an energetic performance of "The Death of Trotsky" from David Ives' "All in the Timing" followed by a wonderful poem on masculinity by Jacob Raymond '23.

Each set concluded with an open dialogue with the audience, benefiting directors, performers, and viewers alike. Directors and performers received feedback on their artistic choices and audiences got a better understanding of what they watched.

The founders were pleasantly surprised by the audience's voluntary participation. Constructive feedback fostered a healthy workshop atmosphere, allowing writers and performers alike to have a better awareness of how their scene plays.

> "It's been a project we've been working on for months and it's great to see it happen. Looking forward, I am excited to see more shows and new faces."

"I think the purpose was achieved tonight. It's been a project we've been working on for months and it's great to see it happen. Looking forward, I am excited to see more shows and new faces," said Iredale.

With a similar atmosphere to Wednesday Open Mic Performances or Middlebury Discount Comedy, Theatre Think Tank looks forward to cultivating a healthy community to perform, engage in artistic dialogue, and to make new friends interested in theater.

"Theatre Think Tank is open to everyone. It thrives when fueled by multiple communities and types of artists. Come share your work, whether it's theatre-based or not. 'Finished' or not. Serious or not. Perfection discouraged. So why not spend an hour with other creatives?" said Middleton in an interview with The Campus.

Radio Roundup: Tunes to get you through the home stretch

By WRMC EXEC BOARD

Have your Spotify playlists become stale? Is your weekly mix just not cutting it? Maybe it's time to branch out and listen to something new. The Executive Board of WRMC, Middlebury College's radio station, has selected a wonderfully wide range of albums, spanning time and genre, for your listening pleasure. Check out these recommendations and let them become the soundtrack to your semester.

*RIYL (recommended if you like)

Music Director's Pick — Chad Kim '23.5

Album: "Confusions" — L'éclair
Genre: Funk, Groove, Instrumental
RIYL: Mauskovic Dance Band, Yin Yin, Sunnyside, High Pulp
Blurb: Following a two-year hiatus following the release of their last album, L'éclair has been putting in the work. On Nov. 12, they released the beauty that is "Confusions." This album has everything I love about this band: immaculate synth, undeniable jam and an eclectic assortment of funk and groove. I highly recommend this album to anyone seeking a gateway to get away from the norm.

Music Director's Pick — Natalie Penna '24

Album: "Get Me To A Nunnery" — WOOZE
Genre: Funk-Rock Infused Pop, Experimental
RIYL: Working Mens Club, The Orielles, Gustaf, Rina Sawayama
Blurb: This EP is 15 minutes of smooth, funky tunes with a huge variety of musical influences. Sometimes it sounds spooky and ethereal, other times like Mario Kart music, but every track feels like it has a place in this dreamscape of an album. It's absolutely bizarre, and one of my favorite releases of the last year.

Creative Director's Pick — Pia Contreras '22

Album: "Voyage" — ABBA
Genre: Pop, Glam Boogie, Scandi-Disco
RIYL: Bee Gees, Olivia Newton-John
Blurb: What is there to say except ABBA made a NEW ALBUM after 40 YEARS! If you liked Mamma Mia, you'll probably like this too. My personal favorite in this album is "No Doubt About It." I feel like it's exactly what you're looking for in an ABBA album — upbeat melodies and killer duet vocals.

Programing Director's Pick — Gennie Herron '23

Album: "Renewal" — Billy Strings
Genre: Americana, Bluegrass, Folk
RIYL: The Avett Brothers, Jerry Garcia and Dave Grisman, boygenius, Julien Baker, I'm With Her
Blurb: Billy Strings is hot sh*t right now, and rightfully so. He is part of a new wave of bluegrass that retains the exceptional musicianship but has a twist of modernity in it. His Grammy winning 2019 album "Home" received attention, but he has blown up in the last couple of months, earning two Grammy nominations and a sold-out tour. His music sounds like it has lots of thought behind it. Strings is the kind of artist for whom bluegrass is his calling because it's got the right amount of sadness and energy. His new album "Renewal" is exciting and I can't wait to see what else he does in the future. My faves so far are "Love and Regret" and "This Old World."

PIA CONTRERAS

Middlebury Pranksters sweep regional event, book tickets to nationals

The men's ultimate frisbee team poses after their victory at New England Regionals. COURTESY OF AUSTIN DAHL

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Staff Writer

The men's and women's ultimate frisbee teams, known as the Pranksters, are nationals bound following comfortable wins at the New England regional tournament on Nov. 13 and14.

Both teams won the regional tournament, securing top bids to nationals. The men's team is the reigning national champion — winning the last time nationals were held in the spring of 2019 — while the women's side will look to improve upon their fifth-place finish from two years ago.

The men's team began the weekend with a 13–6 thrashing against Roger Williams. The Pranksters then triumphed 13–8 over Bates and 13–2 over Brandeis to finish top of its group in pool play. They then defeated Williams 13–4 in a crossover match, setting up a rematch against Brandeis in the New England Regional final.

"We ended up playing the same team in the finals that we played on day one," Colman Bashore '24 said, referring to Brandeis. "We beat them 13–2 the first time, but we had to maintain energy and aggression and stay focused on our goals."

Middlebury repeated the feat with another 13–2 win, booking their ticket to Northern California for nationals.

"Throughout the year we've always talked about trajectory and improving each game, and this tournament we really executed," Ethan DeMaio '24 said.

"We knew we were in it together when we rolled up blaring Midd Kid on the bus speakers," William Fenimore '24 said.

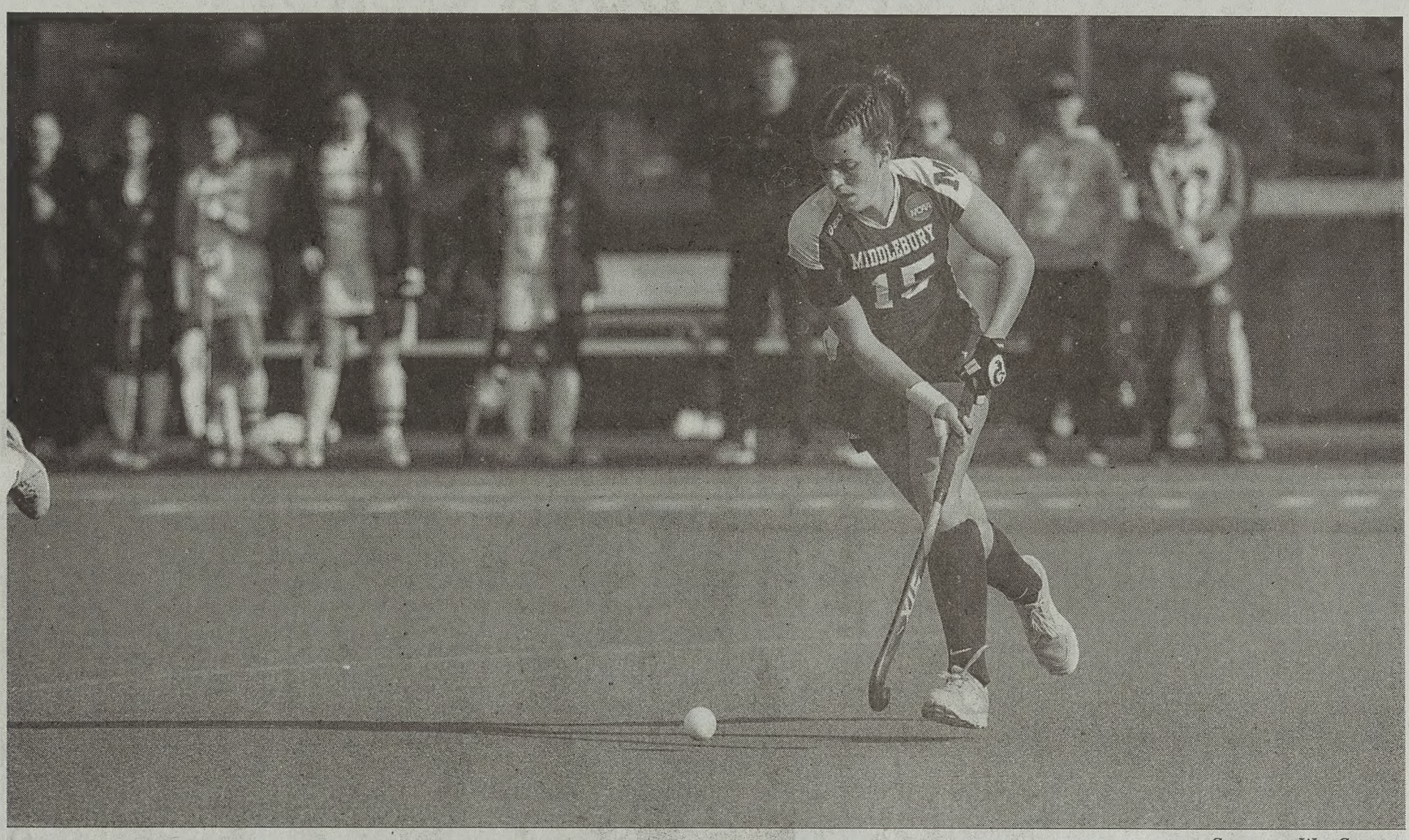
The women's side also enjoyed a comfortable path to victory, going undefeated through pool play with 9–5 and 10–7 wins over Brandeis and Williams, respectively. Despite being seeded as the No. 2 team behind Amherst, the Pranksters stormed to a decisive 11–3 victory over the Mammoths in the final to earn their seat at the national tournament.

"The Pranksters showed up and we played better than we have yet this season," Sarah Rifkin '24 said. "We really came together and used the time to learn how to trust each other and play as a cohesive team."

The results reflected that cohesion as the women's team outscored its opponents by an aggregate score of 30–15.

The Prankster teams will fight for national championships in Norco, Calif., at the Division III National Championships. The tournament is slated to begin on Dec. 17.

RECORD BREAKERS: Field hockey wins fourth consecutive NCAA DIII National Title



Courtesy of Will Costello

Erin Nicholas '22, who ranked first in the NESCAC with 28 goals this fall, pushes the ball forward in the national championship game.

Continued from Page 1

The Johns Hopkins offense had a jolt of energy with three minutes left in the game, scoring a goal on Harlan as a Johns Hopkins player tipped a loose ball into the net during a chaotic scramble. The final score ended, 4–1.

Celebration time

As the clock ticked down from 15 seconds, the players on the sidelines prepared to rush the field. As the buzzer rang, a swarm of players in navy gathered in a huddle to celebrate their fourth consecutive national title. Music rang out over the loudspeakers and fans turned to one another for hugs and high fives, all joining in on the celebration.

Once blue and white streamers were shot out of a cannon and trophies were distributed to the team, honors were given out to players who stood out among all the athletes who played in the tournament. Griffin, Vera, George and Nicholas were all given spots on the all-tournament team. Nicholas was also handed the tournament's most outstanding player award.

Once the ceremony concluded, it was time for Head Coach Katharine DeLorenzo to place Middlebury's name on the champion's spot of the bracket. Needless to say, the crowd went wild and the team once again gathered in a group hug, celebrating their achievement.

After the game, DeLorenzo gathered with Vera, Lazar, Nicholas and George for a press conference, all of whom were wearing shirts distributed by the NCAA that read "CHAMPIONS."

In her opening remarks, DeLorenzo said, "I'm exhausted and happy," as she laughed with the players beside her who nodded their heads in agreement. "Every year the bar of Division III field hockey is being raised and it's really fun to be a part of it," she continued.

DeLorenzo spoke to the strength of the entire team, even those who didn't feature during championship play. She added that it is those players, who work to "be Rowan or Johns Hopkins" during practice, who push the starters to improve their play.

Nicholas pointed out that the team works incredibly hard to "never be satisfied with what we have on the scoreboard." Lazar echoed that sentiment. "The thing our team did phenomenally this year was never taking our feet off the gas," she said.

When asked about setting the record for four straight national championships, DeLorenzo said: "Consecutive doesn't really hold any meaning for me, necessarily, but when you bring the people into the story, that's where it holds so much meaning. Consecutive means that a certain group did this over and over again. I think it speaks to the people who have done it."

Seven questions with Liza Toll '24, women's track & field

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor At Large

Liza Toll '24 sprints out of the blocks at the start of the 4x100 meter relay in May 2021. Short sprinter Liza Toll '24 of Harvard, Massachusetts, is gearing up her first indoor season as a Panther. In this edition of seven questions, she talks about being on a relay team, pre-race rituals, and an exciting return to normal competition.

Charlie Keohane: How did you start running?

Liza Toll: I started running with a kid's track program in town when I was eight or nine. I actually wanted to start running because both of my older siblings ran, and so that was always a thing that I saw growing up. I saw how much they loved to run, and it always looked very fun to me.

CK: What events do you run and why do you like them?

LT: I run short sprints. So indoor, I run the 60 meters and probably also the 200 meters. Outdoor, I run the 100 meters, the 200 meters, and also the 4x100 meter relay. I really like the short events because you really just get to go as fast as you can, and there's something really fun to that. The 4x100 is probably my favorite because it's my favorite distance combined with getting to work directly with my teammates. Relays are always good energy and exciting.

CK: How are you feeling about your first official season with the Panthers?

LT: It's a little weird to think how sophomore year, after having kind of run for a year here, we're going to have our first normal season. It's a little odd to be starting as a sophomore basically, but I'm excited to see what normal competition looks like and hopefully have more chances to compete than we did last year. Last fall and winter, training without competition was just really hard mentally because you're not working directly towards something, and competition really gives you those deadlines and goals. It's really nice to have that in mind as something to work towards.

CK: Do you have any fun pre-meet rituals or traditions you like to follow?

LT: I always do that exact same warm-up, and there's one little jump that I always do. I remember someone taught me in seventh grade. She taught me this little jump thing, and because I looked up to her at the time, that was something that I really took to heart, and it became a part of my pre-race routine. Even though I haven't talked to her in years, it's still something that has stuck with me.

CK: What is something people might not know about running?

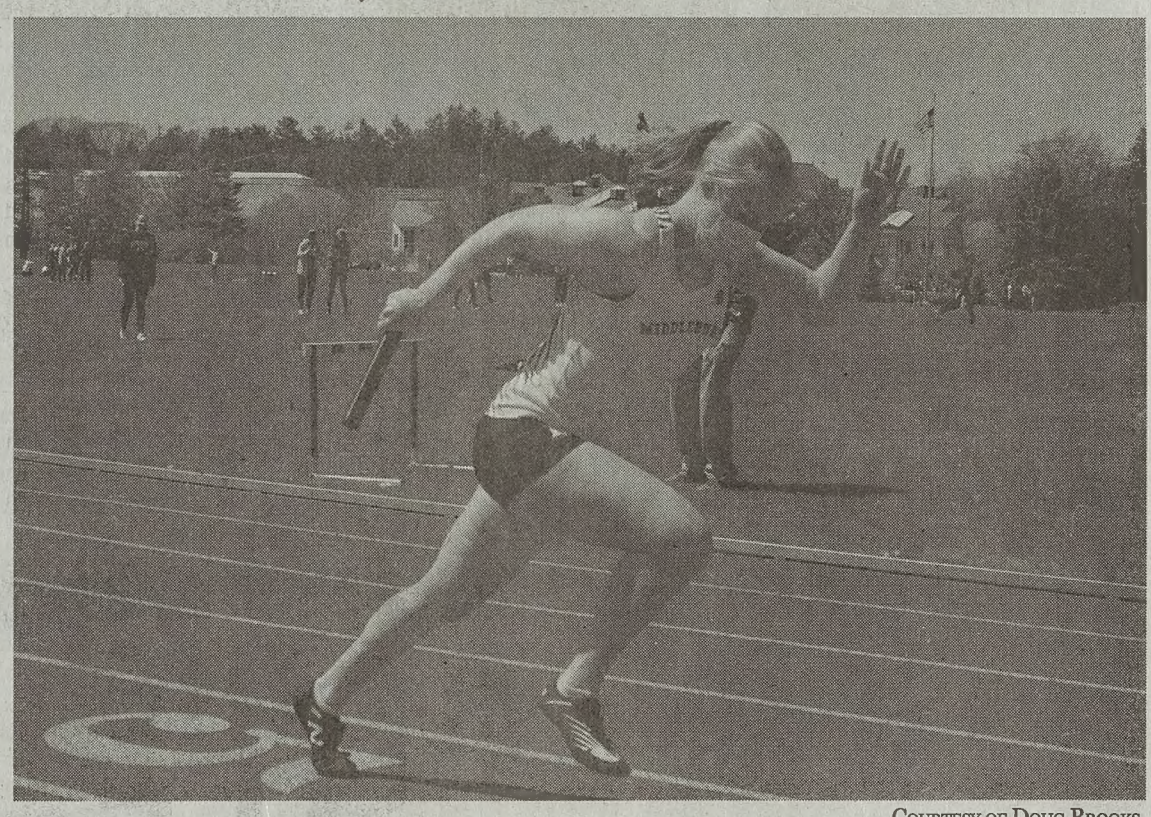
LT: I think one thing that people tend to have wrong about track is that they see it as something that's such an individual sport since people are running their own races, but we still have a really strong team dynamic, and everyone is still there supporting each other and cheering everyone else on. Everyone's still working together even though we're still running on our own—it's still a team environment.

CK: What do you study and what are you involved with outside of track?

LT: I'm a biology major and I plan to also declare a Spanish double major. Outside of academics and track, I work for Oratory Now as a Public Speaking Coach, and I recently started working in Eric Moody's lab as a Research Assistant, which has been a lot of fun. I'm also on a quest to go to as many different towns in Vermont as I can, so that has been a great way to go out and see some really little places that definitely would not be a destination otherwise.

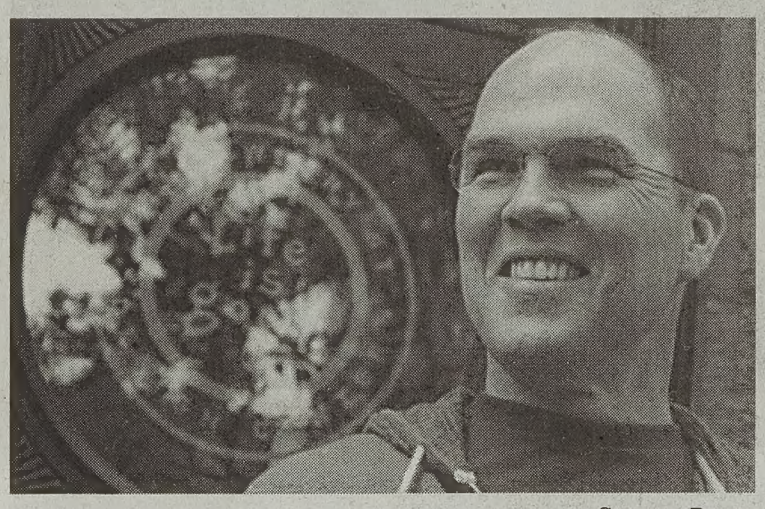
CK: What do you like about the Middlebury team specifically?

LT: I love how big the team is at Midd. Even though that means you're not going to be best friends with every single person on the team, it's really nice to walk around and see so many different people that I know through track. I've definitely talked to a lot of different people who I probably would have never had another reason to talk to. Having that really extended community is something special.



Courtesy of Doug Brooks

Liza Toll '24 sprints out of the blocks at the start of the 4x100 meter relay in May 2021.



Courtesy Photo

Siefer's Scoop Podcast: Roy Heffernan '78, Middlebury Athletics Hall of Fame inductee, current Owner-Partner at Life is Good

By BLAISE SIEFER
Senior Sports Editor

This week, Roy Heffernan '78 joins the Siefer's Scoop podcast. A stellar athlete on both the football and men's lacrosse teams at Middlebury, Heffernan was inducted into the Middlebury Athletics Hall of Fame in 2015. After graduating from the College, Heffernan joined the Life is Good company, where he operated as the Chief Operating Optimist and helped guide the company to incredible success. Currently, Heffernan is an Owner-Partner at Life is Good and makes trips up to Middlebury when he finds the time. On this episode, Heffernan discusses his accomplishments as a student-athlete at Middlebury, his time with Life is Good, and the lessons he's learned from both experiences. He also explains why Middlebury has and continues to play such an instrumental role in his life.

FIND THE SIEFER'S SCOOP PODCAST ON SPOTIFY

Three stories of queerness and expression at Middlebury

By NADIA HARE
Photojournalist

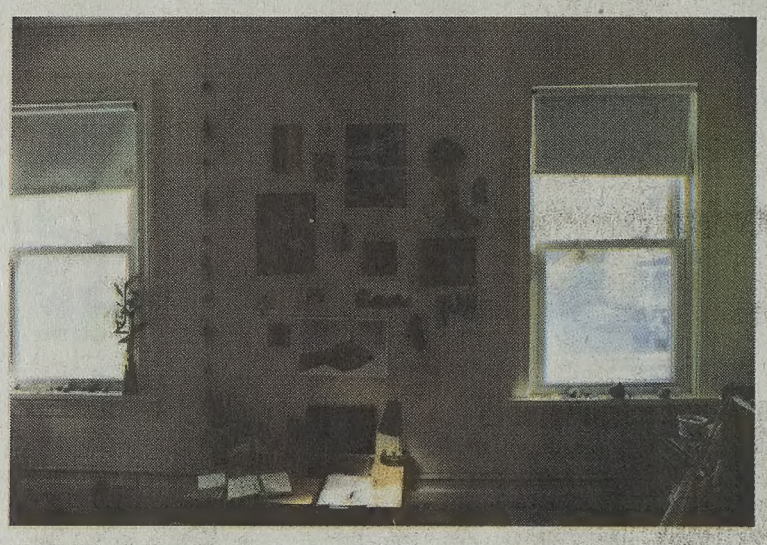
Walking into Elizabeth's bedroom located in the Chinese house, I was met with vibrant arts and crafts pinned to the walls and scattered across the floor. Elizabeth Austin '24 (she/her) is my partner in our Oceanography course and I met Lily Shannon '23 (they/them) during a pre-orientation Zoom for students with disabilities.

While both are from Memphis, Tenn., the couple met at a yard sale on the lawn of the Queer Studies House (QSH).

"We may have played together as children and just not known it," Lily said.

At the time, Lily was also recruiting members for the rugby team, of which they are the captain. "I joined the rugby team because they were cute," giggled Elizabeth. After two and

Continue to No. 2



One of the walls of Elizabeth's bedroom.

No. 2

a half months and a 21-hour car ride together, Elizabeth finally gathered up the courage to ask Lily out.

On the topic of queer inclusivity at Middlebury, the couple agreed that the campus is a more affirming space than back home. "I don't feel attacked for being queer [back home]. I just feel othered in a way that I don't necessarily feel here," Lily explained.

For Elizabeth, the ease at which queerness can be brought up in conversation also aids inclusion. She recalls an instance where she told our Oceanography professor about plans to visit Boston with her girlfriend over fall break. "Whereas at home I would be like, 'My friend and I are going to Boston,'" Elizabeth said.

I learn from Lily, who lives in QSH, that the role of the QSH house as a center for queer social life on campus varies from year to year with the residents of the home. The pandemic has limited certain traditions such as throwing parties after the Queers and Allies drag shows. "Right now the vibe of the QSH house is to have some music, chill with the housemates and have dinner together," Elizabeth explained.

"In the future there will be queer

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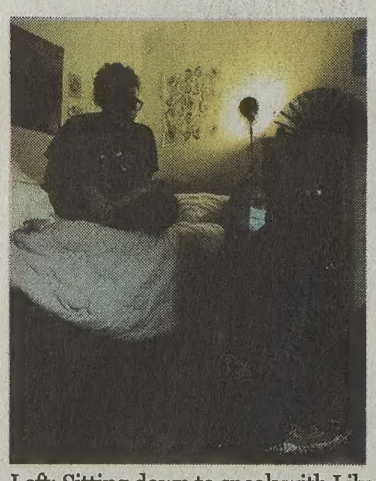


Left: Sitting down to speak with Lily (left) and Elizabeth (right).
Right: Elizabeth deep in thought.

The tattoo on Lily's left arm.

No. 3

parties, I can guarantee it," Lily chimed in.

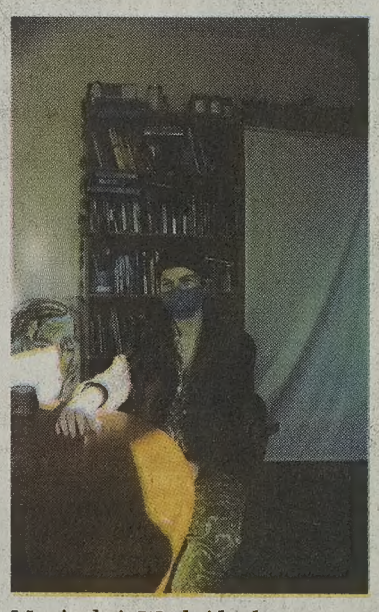
Meg

My first conversation with Meg Farley '24 (they/them) was in Ross after we both attended the Mental Health Forum. Now I sat with them in a small and cozy room located in Weybridge House. Behind them, books overflowed the shelves. The top of the shelves were lined with rows of mason jars.

Meg grew up in the western suburbs of Chicago, one of the most Catholic regions of the country. They choose to re-imagine queerness by rejecting eighteen years of enculturation imbued in them by the Catholic church.

"I'm unlearning decades worth of internalised queer suppression," Meg said.

According to Meg, queerness and faith are not perceived as apples-for-apples. "I was taught that queerness goes against our faith, but I've never actually believed that. I've never had a problem with my identities and religious beliefs. It was more the people preaching these religious beliefs have had problems with my identities. The



Meg in their Weybridge home.

Church is not preaching the truth of what love actually is," they said.

I see myself as a pretty agnostic person, and the confidence that radiated from Meg as they sped through queer theory felt as if they were preaching a sort of religion.

"I'm of the belief that Trans is sacred. My existence should make other people question what they know of

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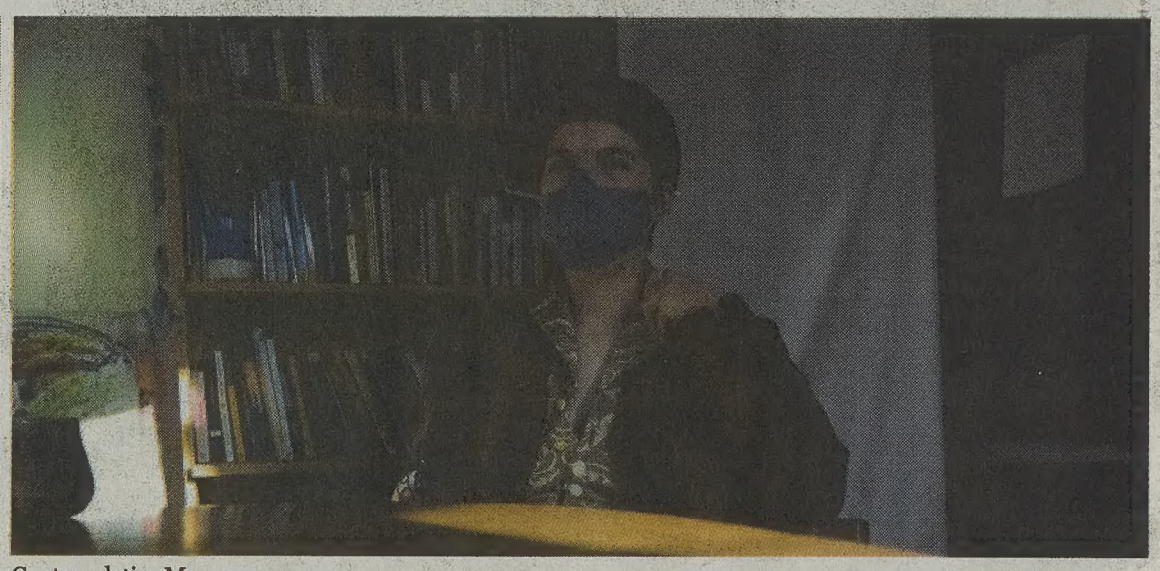


Contemplative Meg.

Meg preaching to me and their tea.

The bookshelf and Meg's hand.

No. 4

gender and sexuality," Meg said.

The self–assuredness and thrill in exploration of their queer identity was truly unmatched. Yet, it is necessary to recognize that this expression of queerness is a status that is not accessible for all.

"It takes a lot of privilege to be able to disregard these social standards and feel safe doing so. I used to rely on these standards for safety reasons and I sometimes still do, I just no longer need to and it's really freeing," Meg said.

Cherry

Earlier last spring when I was still a prospective student, I was lucky enough to exchange a few Instagram DMs with Cherry Lawrence '23 (she/her), then formally met her at a couple of Women of Color (WOC) meetings. I spoke with Cherry in the Mitchell Green Room of the McCullough Student Center.

I asked Cherry about her impressions of LGBTQ+ dating culture on this campus. Her response: "It has sucked."

I prompted her to go on. She reveals that her brutally honest response was a residual from her first semester at Middlebury, when hook-up culture took on a heightened form of toxic competitiveness.

And men.

"Not that I was actively doing it, but since I stopped expecting attention from guys and geared more of my interest towards non–men, it definitely has been better. But it also still does suck," Cherry laughed.

"At Midd, the dating culture is already weird. Within the LGBTQ scene it's weirder. And then being a woman of color, specifically Black, is like so niche and much weirder," she said.

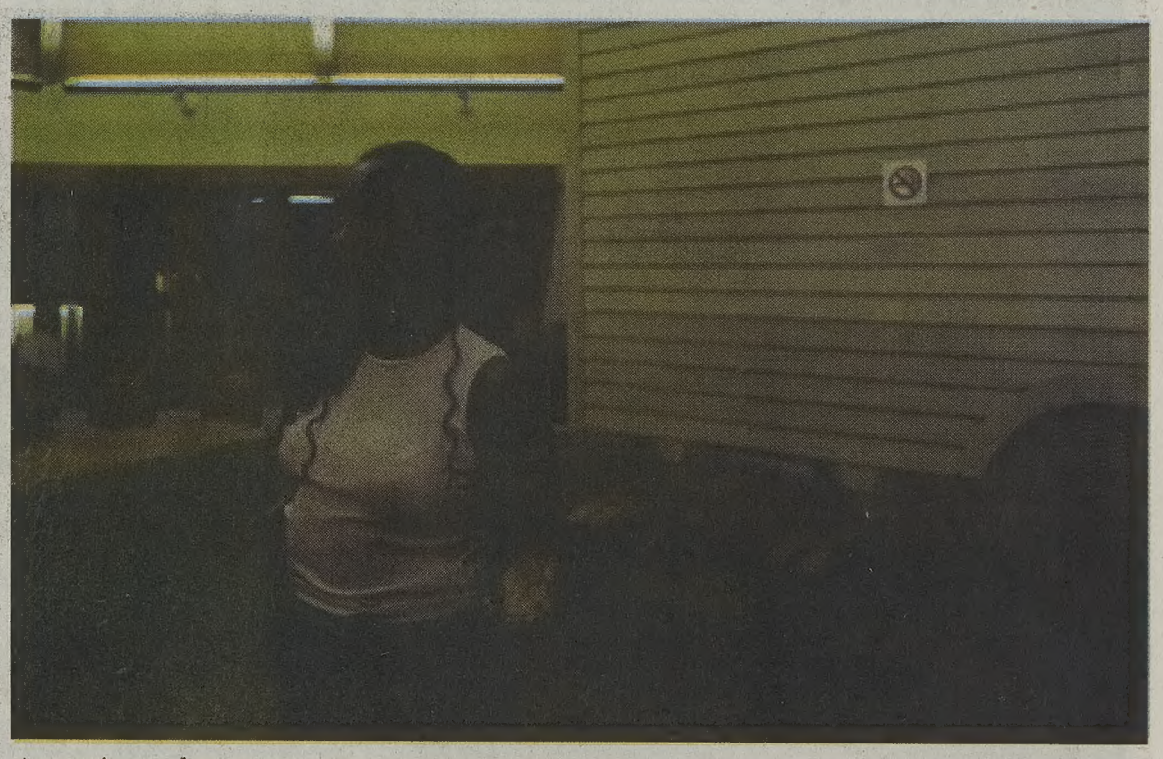
Cherry grew up in New York City, which is her direct point of reference when it comes to discussing the relationships between queerness and race at Middlebury. In comparison to New York, the campus can feel overwhelmingly white. Some students at Middlebury have not had the privilege of living and sharing experiences with people of color (POC). Thus, they may arrive on campus with presumptions about the "other" races. According to Cherry, these presumptions remain unchallenged if we do not actively position ourselves in circumstances to meet POC.

Cherry feels that when attention is directed towards POC, it is often in the form of fetishization, although in New York, this is sometimes less of a risk than at Middlebury. "If I chose to hook up with a white person in New York I usually see a smaller chance of me being fetishized because I'm not this exotic creature. I'm someone they see every day," she said.

For a predominantly heterosexual campus, we can come to appreciate the array in lived experiences of queer students. It's fascinating to reflect on the varying degrees of LGBTQ representation embedded into our upbringings and its influence on the exploration of queerness and expressions at Midd.

Cherry in the Mitchell Green Room.

A back view of Cherry.



A pause in speech.

PHOTOS BY NADIA HARE